

Red Letter Media's Episode I Review

A Study in Fanboy Stupidity

Celebrity Responses to Red Letter Media

"Your life is about to change. This is astounding film making. Watch ALL of it."

-Damon Lindelof, co-creator of the television series *Lost*

"That Star Wars review is amazing."

-Simon Pegg, actor

Hey, if a celebrity thinks so, then it MUST be true!



"He was deceived by a lie. We all were."

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What's This All About?

Almost everyone reading this response of mine already knows what Red Letter Media is. However, I thought I might take some time to explain what it is (and why I'm writing against it) for anyone who might come across this essay in the future, without much prior knowledge on anything. Feel free to skip this entire introduction, if you just want to go ahead to my actual response.

Red Letter Media? What's that?

Red Letter Media is the video production company of independent filmmaker Mike Stoklasa. Under the Red Letter Media (henceforth abbreviated as "RLM") label, Stoklasa has released numerous comedic movie reviews in video form. Stoklasa performs his reviews in the guise of a character named "Mr. Plinkett," a deranged serial killer. Plinkett speaks in a dull, droning monotone, and the humor in his videos is based on saying violent, and outrageous things. Throughout this essay, Stoklasa, RLM, and Plinkett will all be mentioned frequently and interchangeably.

In December 2009, Stoklasa released a scathing 70-minute long attack on the first *Star Wars* prequel, *Episode I: The Phantom Menace* (TPM). His TPM review received millions of views on YouTube and RLM's own website, gaining RLM a measure of fame on the internet. Internet fans, including the aforementioned celebrities, heaped praise upon the review. Many people called it "amazing," "spot on," "perfect," and a host of other superlatives.

RLM's Episode I review was followed a few months later with a longer review of *Episode II: Attack of the Clones* (AOTC), running approximately 90 minutes long. In December 2010, a nearly two-hour long review of *Episode III: Revenge of the Sith* (ROTS) was released.

Why do you care what he thinks about a movie?

I will be upfront about my opinion on TPM. I liked the movie, and consider it a worthy part of the *Star Wars* saga despite its flaws. I also think that the movie is very underrated by some vocal fans on the internet. Fans who denounce the film as unwatchable garbage, calling it the "worst movie ever" and crudely claiming that it "raped their childhood." These claims always seemed exaggerated and overdramatic to me, especially given the movie's box office success, the positive feedback from audience polls, and the continued popularity of the *Star Wars* franchise. Despite the movie's mainstream success, and its mixed but not horrible reviews from critics

(62% favorable, qualifying as "Fresh" on Rotten Tomatoes), the false perception of the movie as a complete failure that everyone hates has spread throughout the internet.

I'll also admit to not liking Stoklasa's style. I find his Mr. Plinkett character extremely annoying, with a dull voice that sounds horrible even if it's intentional. He also mispronounces words on purpose, making things even more of a chore to listen to. I don't understand how anyone can bash Jar Jar Binks on one hand but like Mr. Plinkett on the other. In pretty much any other piece of entertainment, annoying impressions are brief and last only long enough to make their points. Annoying characters are shunted into mere supporting roles. In Stoklasa's review, the annoying impression comes from the narrator, and runs throughout the whole thing. I think his voice is a one-note joke. If it was ever funny to begin with, it certainly doesn't make me laugh after he carries on with it for over an hour. Nor do I laugh at his disgusting jokes about murder and rape.

But my opinions about TPM and Mr. Plinkett aren't why I'm writing this. I'm writing this lengthy response to Stoklasa's review because it's massively overrated, and simply wrong and even dishonest on numerous points. Episode I detractors have rallied around the review, with numerous people praising it as a devastatingly intelligent and insightful critique of the movie. I've even seen URL links to the video being posted on internet forums, as a way to silence Episode I supporters and end debate on the movie. All this despite the fact that Stoklasa's review is full of shoddy work and awful analysis, which I will explain in the course of my response.

I suspect that the one-sided praise stems from the sheer length of the RLM review. The average person likes to receive information in small doses, accepting what is told to them without bothering to examine anything in depth. Because the RLM review is seventy minutes long, I doubt that most people, including those who praise it to the skies, have actually paid attention while watching the whole thing through.

During some geeky online arguments, I've seen some people take Stoklasa's statements at face value, mindlessly parroting his words as truth. Even though his review betrays a shocking lack of knowledge about TPM's themes and most basic plot points, as well as a number of other subjects that touches on. People who took a casual glance at the RLM review liked it and said why. People who didn't like it, or saw it for the lousy work that it is, either didn't care to talk about it or were shouted down by the masses.

Stupidity, exaggeration, getting overrated by sheep-like followers...the RLM review of TPM basically covers all of my pet peeves. It's not even *hard* to show why it's dumb, because some of the things in that review are just really dumb. But still, many people think that it's the greatest and smartest fanboy work ever. I've seen it being said that videos, especially long ones, are a lousy medium for online discussion. That's because someone often has to watch large parts of a video just to find the few moments that he's looking for. While a written response such as this

one can also be long, it is far easier to skim and quote from using search functions. That increases transparency and makes the truth easier to see. So I guess I'll have to be the one who points out that the emperor has no clothes, and that Stoklasa's review isn't as smart as a lot of people think it is.

Isn't it all just his opinion?

No, the things stated in the RLM review aren't just Stoklasa's opinion. I'm going to go over the subject of opinions now, since this is an excuse that I've already seen too many times.

An opinion is just personal belief, that doesn't have to be justified by anything at all. If someone simply says "I like the color red," then who are you to dispute that? *How* can anyone even dispute that? You can't. Similarly, if someone just says "I didn't like Episode I," then he is entitled to that opinion. Pure opinions reside in safe territory, and can't be disputed on logical grounds since they aren't based on any logic to begin with.

The flip side to that is that pure opinions are also utterly unconvincing. Who cares if someone likes the color red, or doesn't like a certain movie? Everybody has opinions. No one should be able to convince anyone else that their opinion is the "correct" one if it isn't founded on anything consistent and external to themselves.

But the RLM review doesn't stay within the safety of pure opinion, and its supporters *do* think that it's a very convincing denunciation of TPM. The bulk of the RLM review is spent on nitpicking the movie's plot, in an effort to show that TPM makes no sense and that George Lucas is a terrible writer. When you argue that something in a movie doesn't make any sense, you are making claims about how it relates to other things, onscreen or in real life. Things which exist outside of yourself, and can be observed by everyone. You have stepped away from pure opinion, and into the realm of factual statements. That makes your statements fair game for analysis and criticism.

Don't you realize that the review is supposed to be comedy?

Of course it's intended as comedy (I don't care to argue over opinions of whether it's actually funny). So was *Freddie Got Fingered*. Most people don't look to Tom Green movies for intelligent commentary - hell, most people don't even like Tom Green.

If you're going to use the "comedy" excuse as a defense of Stoklasa's review, then that deflates its credibility as a source of commentary. If something is stupid because it's meant to be stupid, it doesn't change the fact that it's still stupid.

The "comedy" excuse is also often disingenuous. Too often, it is resorted to by desperate people who have run out of better excuses to defend something with. Something's just a stupid comedy? Fine. Then stop pointing to it as proof of anything, or as a guide on how to think. Don't flip-flop later on, when it's convenient for you to act as if it's not just a stupid comedy.

Isn't writing a hundred-page response really geeky?

Yes, it is. It's very geeky. So is making numerous video reviews of scifi movies, many of them well over an hour long. So is arguing about decades-old movies on internet forums. So is investing so much emotion and expectations into a movie series that you regard a new installment as a major life event, and cry about how it "raped your childhood" if it so much as underwhelmed you.

I just want it to be known that I *didn't* obsessively work on this response nonstop. It was written intermittently, over the course of more than half a year. I stopped numerous times, either because I had something better to do or because I just didn't feel like working on this. Listening to Mr. Plinkett over and over again wasn't my idea of a fun night or weekend afternoon. There were entire weeks or months when I didn't touch this at all.

So if any RLM-lover says that I've gone too far by doing this, he's full of crap. Especially if he's posting from a scifi, fantasy, or comic book forum.

Are you going to make all sorts of lame excuses to defend the movie?

I'll let the readers decide for themselves if that's the case. Although my own answer is a firm "no." I like TPM and think that it's been very underrated, but by no means do I think that it's perfect. I regard it as one of the lesser *Star Wars* movies. Good, but not the religious event that too many fanboys unfortunately expected it to be.

Praising a movie isn't even the same exact thing as refuting criticism of it. If the RLM review makes some stupid claims about how the movie doesn't make any sense, then it's not necessarily praising the movie to point out the review's errors and omissions.

How did you write this response? What was your methodology?

I first learned of the RLM reviews while reading a forum thread about AOTC. There I saw some of Stoklasa's points against the movie, which I took issue with. The poor arguments that I read didn't fit with the one-sided praise for it given by many of the people posting on the forum. So I decided to look a little deeper. I watched the first part of Stoklasa's AOTC review, and came away disgusted by the methods that he used to make his points. I saw stupid questions being asked in an attempt to portray plot holes in the prequels, even though the answers to those questions had already been made clear in the movies. Such as asking whether Sidious was a former Jedi gone bad, despite his frequent meetings with the Jedi as Palpatine without anyone ever treating him as such. I saw the use of loaded language, unsupported speculation, and character assassination to poison the well against George Lucas before even starting with a review of the actual movie. I initially intended to write a response to Stoklasa's AOTC review, but part of me wanted to start from the beginning. So I decided to watch his TPM review, all the way through.

Before watching the Episode I review, I was mentally prepared to face the movie's actual shortcomings and give a pass to large parts of the review. Because to be honest, some of the things in Episode I, such as Jar Jar Binks and kiddie Anakin, make the movie an easy target. I wanted to be evenhanded in my analysis, and to give Stoklasa a fair shake despite what I had already seen. So I set the following ground rules:

1. Take notes on the review as it plays out, but don't come to a final conclusion about it until seeing the whole thing through.
2. If the review makes a good point, acknowledge it.
3. Each *Star Wars* film should fit in with previously released episodes. However, people watching these movies should also be expected to know the previous movies.
4. Disregard all information from the *Star Wars* "Expanded Universe" books. Most people don't read them. The movie series should be expected to stand on its own.

Even though I made an effort to be fair and give credit where it was due, I ended up disliking RLM *even more* after seeing the entire review of TPM. And my notes ended up being far longer than I could've ever imagined. Many of Stoklasa's points weren't just bad, but so extremely bad that it made me wonder whether he even understood the movies at a very basic level. He said so many shockingly ignorant things that I didn't want to let any of it pass without criticism. Which is how I came to write this very long response of my mine.

How is this response structured?

Stoklasa's review of TPM is seventy minutes long. On YouTube, it is evenly divided into seven separate 10-minute parts. My response is structured to follow the YouTube postings. The time in each YouTube video where Stoklasa made a significant point is displayed. As you can see from the closeness of the times, my response covers almost all of his points. Stoklasa's review actually consists of various parts or chapters within each video, which are not to be confused with the seven separate videos posted on YouTube. The titles of each part/chapter will also be shown and bolded as they come along.

Quotes from Stoklasa (most of them from his "Mr. Plinkett" character) are bolded. Parts where Stoklasa used clips and quotes from the movie and other sources are bolded as well as indented. My own comments are written in normal text.

The Review of the Review

The following is my extensive, point-by-point response. The cited times were taken from the review's posting on YouTube, not from RLM's website or anywhere else.

Feel free to skim. The various parts, and even points of the review are clearly separated for easy reading. Most parts of this response can be read independently from each other.

I fully encourage anyone reading this to open up the YouTube videos and pop in their DVDs of the movie. I'm confident in what I've written here, but don't take my word for it. Check everything you read as you go along. I want everything to be transparent, and for everyone to think for themselves.

PART 1

In this first part, Stoklasa goes over the basics of what he likes to see in a movie, which is fair. What isn't fair is how he gives short shrift to TPM, refusing to say that it meets even the most basic of standards even when it does. He also claims that two of TPM's characters are indescribable blank slates, which is untrue as you will see.

0:53

Plinkett: "Nothing in *The Phantom Menace* makes any sense at all. It comes off like a script written by an eight-year old. It's like George Lucas finished the script in one draft, like he turned it in and they decided to go with it, without anyone saying that it made no sense at all, or it was a stupid incoherent mess"

As you will see later on, TPM made far more sense than Stoklasa gives it credit for. The alternative stories that he suggests actually make less sense than the actual thing.

1:10

Unsupported statements that Lucas **"controls every aspect of the movie"** and **"probably got rid of those people that questioned him creatively a long time ago"** are made. Basic smear tactics.

1:53

The review abruptly jumps to its first part, **"1. The Characters."**

Plinkett talks about movie "Protagonists" (annoying pronounced "Pro-toe-gone-ist"). He makes some fair points about the value of having likable, identifiable protagonists who the audience roots for, though he's very decompressed as he runs off a long list of movie heroes and shows numerous short clips from various movies. Mostly he shows a bunch of teenage and young adult Regular Joe characters taking crap from people early in their movies, before their adventures start. This takes up most of the next four minutes.

5:33

Plinkett: "I want you to tell me who the main character of *The Phantom Menace* was."

He goes through the various characters of TPM, starting with the two Jedi, Qui-Gon Jinn and Obi-Wan Kenobi:

Plinkett: "I can tell ya that it's not the Jedi, they were just on some kinda boring mission that they didn't really care about." [A short clip is shown of Qui-Gon taking a Trade Federation servant droid's drink, as he was sitting down for planned negotiations]

The Jedi didn't care about their mission? They were just there drinking tea, and not fighting? It's really nice to see him make his first real point against the movie in such a fair and honest way. He's totally not trying to start things off by putting misleading impressions in people's heads...

He also calls the Jedi "boring." That's OK if that's his opinion, although being "boring" doesn't disqualify someone from being a main character.

Here's a secret: Qui-Gon is the main character and big hero of this movie, which spends most of its time following him.

5:47

Plinkett: "It wasn't Queen Amidala, cuz she was some foreign queen the movie was certainly not really about specifically either."

True, she's just a supporting character.

5:54

Plinkett: "Ya might be thinking that it's Anakin, cuz he's like a slave, and saved the day at the end, by accidentally blowing up the starship. But the audience doesn't meet Anakin until 45 minutes into the movie."

Wrong. Anakin shows up at almost exactly 32 minutes into the movie. Anakin's resentment at being regarded as a "slave" and not as "a person," as well as his piloting skills and his dreams of leaving Tatooine are quickly introduced. Stoklasa could've made an honest mistake, or he could've been exaggerating to make his case look stronger than it really is.

Plinkett: "And then the things that are happening around him are pretty much out of his control or understanding. If a protagonist has no concept of what's going on or what's at stake, then there's no real tension or drama. Without that there's no story. So the conclusion is that there isn't one." [very short clips of Anakin being dwarfed by the adult characters, and his eyes shifting around, are shown]

Another biased portrayal of what happened in the movie. It's amazing how casually Stoklasa passes off false statements during his review, which can go undetected because most people aren't looking at everything so critically. He makes false statements about what a main character's is thinking, and even about his very motivations. I almost let this one go myself, before realizing that it was completely untrue.

Few people will disagree with the idea that Anakin wasn't handled as well as he could have been. But Anakin is clearly one of two main characters. Qui-Gon stands above the rest of the heroes in the beginning and the end, while Anakin is the focus of the middle portion of this movie. That middle portion focuses on Anakin's plight as a slave, the big podrace, and his painful parting of ways with his mother. He's knows what's going on - hell, he's the one who leads the way by stepping up and selflessly offering to race as a way to help the other heroes.

The Naboo crisis was very simple (at least in the way that it appeared to all the heroes). Anakin is told that the other heroes are on a **"very important mission"** for the Republic early on during the dinner table scene. On the Naboo Royal Starship, Anakin is in the room while Padmé watches the hologram reporting widespread deaths on Naboo. To be fair he might not have been paying attention (he was suffering from the coldness of space at the time), but Padmé goes on to directly about the suffering of the Naboo people. Anakin stands next to the adult heroes during almost every scene on Naboo after that, while they were all planning their battle against the Trade Federation. He knew what was going on, and a few seconds of Anakin moving his head around (taken out of context) does not change that.

6:22

Plinkett points out that Obi-Wan doesn't really get much to do throughout this movie. Valid point. He was very underused and should've had more to say and do.

6:52

Plinkett offers the following challenge:

Plinkett: "Describe the following Star Wars character WITHOUT saying what they look like, what kind of costume they wore, or what their profession or role was in the movie. Describe this character to your friends like they ain't never seen Star Wars."

This is to examine the characters' personalities, basically who they are. According to Stoklasa, if you can describe a character at length without mentioning the above things, he/she is a strong character.

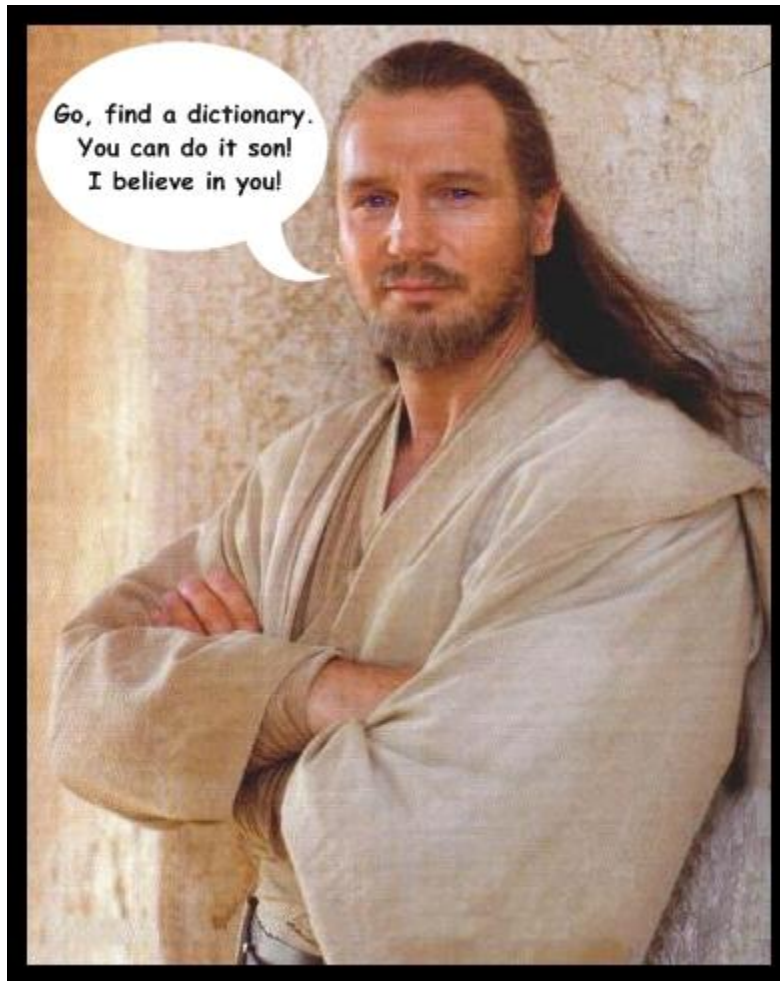
RLM questions five different people, who alternate between original trilogy and prequel characters. They start with **Han Solo**. Mostly they repeat the same things: rogue, arrogant, charming. One guy points out Han's mean streak (shooting Greedo), but that he has a heart of gold underneath. All accurate observations. I'll let it slide that the girl calls Han "sexy" (her opinion, and also his looks), and that they call him a "womanizer" (something that doesn't show up until TESB).

8:00

Then they try the game on Qui-Gon, and the way they go about it isn't pretty. While this review had already resorted to a number of tricks to make its case, this is the point when the bias becomes truly blatant and outrageous.

One guy says Qui-Gon is "**stoic**," and then acts as if he's struggling to think of anything else. The girl pretends that she *doesn't remember who Qui-Gon is*, despite how much of TPM is spent following him. Yeah, right. More of Stoklasa's amateur actors (oops, I mean friends and regular people) put on a show to supposedly support his claim that Qui-Gon is a nothing, a blank slate of a character who can't be described in any way. It's one thing to think that the original trilogy characters were superior to the prequel characters (not an outrageous opinion at all), but to act as if you can't come up with a single descriptive word is just over the top. Not a single adjective...except for one guy who displays an ignorance of vocabulary by laughably labeling Qui-Gon as "**stern**." Qui-Gon Jinn, a stern man...

No, Qui-Gon Jinn is most certainly not "stern." In fact he's the complete opposite, and can basically be summed up as an idealized father figure. Strong, brave, in control, but also kind and soft spoken. The type of man many people probably wished their dad would be like when they were kids. Qui-Gon is calm and patient when dealing with others, and he believes in the people he takes under his wing. He quickly saw Anakin's potential and believed that the boy would go on to do great things. His faith in Anakin was so strong that he trusted the boy to win the podrace and save the mission.



Qui-Gon's personality is frequently juxtaposed with Obi-Wan's. Despite his relatively small part in TPM, many of Obi-Wan's scenes were used to reinforce a consistent portrayal of his personality. And that personality is a bit more uptight and critical, in ironic contrast to his older mentor. Obi-Wan is focused on business, while his mentor has a soft spot for helping people that they encounter along the way. For example, Obi-Wan wanted to leave Jar Jar behind (with Gungans who would **"punish"** him) as soon as the Jedi acquired a needed submarine, stating **"Master, we are short on time."** Qui-Gon wouldn't have it though, and went out of his way to save the annoying and useless Jar Jar. This comes up again later in the movie. When Qui-Gon went back to pick up Anakin after winning the hyperdrive generator that they needed to fix their ship, Obi-Wan asked **"Why do I sense we've picked up another pathetic life form?"** The

message is clear: Qui-Gon is compassionate, and is willing to take on additional burdens in order to help others.

Qui-Gon was also clearly portrayed as a free-minded maverick, while Obi-Wan was more conservative, by the book, and submissive toward authorities. This portrayal started as early as the movie's first few minutes, when the Jedi were waiting to begin their negotiations with the Trade Federation. Obi-Wan brings up an old lesson of Master Yoda's, to **"be mindful of the future."** Qui-Gon reminds his pupil that it shouldn't come **"at the expense of the moment,"** and that Obi-Wan should **"be mindful of the living Force."** So right away we saw Obi-Wan rather simplistically falling back on a teacher's old lesson, which Qui-Gon knew the limits of. Sensing the future implies meditation and far off thinking, removed from the actual world in front of you ("the moment," or "the living Force"). Qui-Gon was shown as someone who saw things for what they were, while Obi-Wan and the other Jedi seemed distant in comparison.

Qui-Gon's differences with the rest of the Jedi Order didn't end there. Of all the Jedi, he was the only one who believed in Anakin (which goes back to his fundamental trait, which is his trusting nature) and wasn't deterred by the boy's age or natural feelings of fear and detachment, things which led the other Jedi to reject him right in accordance with their doctrines and traditions. Qui-Gon didn't care about the old doctrines though. He stood up for what he believed, and insisted on training Anakin. On the other hand, Obi-Wan said **"Do not defy the Council Master, not again."** He also tells his mentor **"If you would just follow the code you would be on the Council,"** implying that Qui-Gon is an equal to his superiors on the Council, but that they have kept him down because he wouldn't follow along with what they've said. None of this swayed Qui-Gon, who answered **"I shall do what I must."**

Later in the movie, on Naboo, Obi-Wan eventually apologizes for questioning his mentor's judgment. Not because he thought that Qui-Gon was right, but because **"it's not my place to disagree with you."** Rather than rub it in or assert his authority, Qui-Gon simply smiled and praised his apprentice. That's...completely different from the way that Obi-Wan would handle his disputes with Anakin in AOTC. Remember Qui-Gon, Obi-Wan, and the Jedi Council's portrayals as described in this section. TPM laid a lot of groundwork, and all of this stuff cuts to the thematic core of the *Star Wars* saga. All of this will also come up later, in my response to Stoklasa's review.

Yeah, I sure struggled to find something to say about Qui-Gon. Couldn't describe him with a single word...instead I went on for several hundred.

8:33

They move on to C-3PO: Bumbling, prissy, anal-retentive, comic relief. This is correct.

9:00

Queen Amidala's turn. For the next minute, RLM's group of amateur actors pretend that they can't think of anything to say about Amidala. Just like they did with Qui-Gon. If it wasn't an act, then these people were either oblivious, or they didn't put any effort into this. Not because Padmé Amidala is an example of an expertly handled character, but because it's not exactly a tall order to come up with a single thing to describe her. So as I did with Qui-Gon, I'm going to have to refute the extreme and exaggerated claims that Padmé was an inhuman blank slate.

It's far too easy to dismiss her as such though, based on her stone face and rigidly formal speech while in her Queen Amidala identity. I mean, just look at her:



She's like a mannequin, or a creepy living doll. No personality whatsoever...if you think that's the entirety of her characterization, in total defiance of how she acted *outside* of her identity as the queen, then you aren't thinking this through at all. The question everyone should ask themselves is "Why would anyone ever choose to dress and act like this?" We know Padmé acts differently, and can actually express emotion and crack a smile when the makeup is off. The truth is that she feels trapped in her role as the queen. Why else would she put on so many awkward dresses and paint her face in ghostly makeup?

Not long after the Trade Federation's invasion, Darth Sidious tells its leaders that **"Queen Amidala is young and naive,"** and that they will **"find controlling her will not be**

difficult." In *Star Wars*, being young means being controlled and jerked around by various authority figures, both good-intentioned and manipulative. Anakin was a slave, and Luke was a farm boy with a cautious and fearful uncle who kept him from going out and seeing the world (or galaxy, in his case). In Padmé's case, she was the Queen of Naboo, forced (or believing herself forced) to live under all of the responsibilities, constraints, and formalities that come with that role.

The caged little princess is not a new or unusual idea in fiction. It repeatedly shows up among Disney princesses. Those characters tend to deal with their constraints by sneaking out and seeking adventure and new experiences. And that's exactly what Padmé does in TPM, while posing as a mere handmaiden. When Qui-Gon sets off toward the city on Tatooine, Padmé gets her security guard Captain Panaka to convince Qui-Gon to take her along, not knowing that she is the actual queen.

Captain Panaka: "The Queen wishes it. She's curious about the planet."

Padmé was curious, because as had been clearly stated before, she's young and inexperienced. Seeing Tatooine (as well as Coruscant later) is eye-opening experiences for her, and she's exposed to things that she had never seen during her sheltered life on Naboo. Things such as slavery and dirty politics. But it's during and after her trip to Tatooine where we see bits of the real Padmé. She's sweet and caring, looking out for Anakin and comforting the boy.

Padmé was easily the most inexperienced and least qualified of the movie's significant characters, aside from Jar Jar. Even Anakin, the only character younger than her, possessed more skills and had seen more of the real world than her (never mind his supernatural powers). But even though she was unable to handle her job, Padmé nonetheless took her duties very seriously. The tremendous responsibilities weighing down on her, as how much it tore her up inside, were shown by occasional moments of sadness. What does Padmé do when the Trade Federation's invasion army marches into her city? She sadly stares out the window, helpless:



Now you can say that that reaction was dictated by the events, and that feeling sad about an invasion doesn't exactly set you apart. Which is true. However, it should be noted that Padmé is the only one of the movie's main characters to be shown reacting like that. And her helplessness was shown more than once. On Tatooine, she argued that **"the Queen will not approve"** more than once during disagreements with Qui-Gon, to no avail. Even Qui-Gon, the nicest and most trusting adult hero in the movie, didn't think much of the Queen or Padmé's opinions. Later on Coruscant, during the nomination process for a new Chancellor and with the fate of her world up in the air, all Padmé can do is forlornly stare out a window (again) and wait.



But it is on Coruscant where Padmé begins to take control of the situation. Tired of waiting for the corrupt and useless Senate to act, she decides to go back to Naboo herself in an effort to save her people. And on Naboo itself, she finally casts off the queen and handmaiden disguises that she had been weighing her down. Without the makeup and costumes, she's finally free to be the person that she's capable of being. And it's this Padmé who makes the plans that the other heroes all go by. She's the one who leads the successful attack on the palace, capturing the Trade Federation Viceroy. So despite not being the movie's central character, Padmé does have a little arc of her own. She goes from scared and overwhelmed girl, with a strong sense of her duties but an inability to meet them, to a leader who takes charge of the situation. Her success, as well as Anakin's, highlight the movie's themes about young people overcoming their fears to pursue their potential.

Now I'm going to go outside the scope of TPM in the next couple of paragraphs, and talk about AOTC, since I doubt I'll ever get anyone to read a lengthy analysis of Padmé Amidala again. But seeing AOTC after TPM, I was relatively impressed with how the

older Padmé tied into her younger self. In AOTC, Padmé repeatedly turns away help and seeks to be independent and self-sufficient. She leads the anti-militarization faction in the Senate. She initially refuses the Jedi's protection after the assassination attempt against her, and insists on making all of the security decisions (instead of Anakin, her assigned bodyguard) later on Naboo. She's also the one who takes charge and decides to save Obi-Wan, when Anakin had been reluctant to go because of strict orders from the Jedi Council. During the arena scene, did she rely on the Anakin and Obi-Wan to save her? No. While the two Jedi were still chained up, Padmé used a hidden lock pick to free herself.

These are things that I would expect from an older, more independent woman, who had long since learned that she couldn't rely on others. But in AOTC, she still retains the serious devotion to duty that she had in the first movie, going so far as to cite that as the reason why she couldn't be with Anakin. Obi-Wan brings it up as well during the final battle. When Padmé falls from a ship and onto the desert, Anakin wants to give up their pursuit of Count Dooku in order to attend to her. Obi-Wan convinces Anakin to keep on going, making him admit if Padmé were in his position, **"She would do her duty."**

So when people call Padmé a perfect little goody two-shoes, I think they're being simplistic. Padmé is someone with a strong sense of service, which she does her best to perform. But she's also sad, carrying the distrust and feelings of isolation that had been ingrained into her by the troubles of her youth.

None of this long analysis is meant to "prove" that Padmé is a great character who you must love, or that she was even as "good" as the characters in the original trilogy. However, one could argue that she's deeper than quite a few original trilogy characters. At the very least, she can be described far beyond the biased and simplistic claims of the RLM review, which equates her with nothing.

Part 2

Stoklasa jumps right into a criticism of the plot, relying heavily on nitpicks.

0:00

Plinkett: "From the very start of this movie, I could tell something was really wrong. Just by the way it started."

Stoklasa gives his own exaggerated and twisted version of the movie's beginning:

He says that the movie starts off with a **"boring pilot"** (the woman flying the ship), leaving out the fact that approaching blockade of massive ships. Or that the pilot is sitting in front of two mysterious robed figures, who are seen only from the back. One of whom gets right down to business and tells the pilot that they **"wish to board at once."** The pilot hails the Trade Federation ship, and the alien leader responds by claiming that their blockade was **"perfectly legal"** and that they **"would be happy to receive the ambassadors"** (both lies, as he's clearly up to something and trying to buy some time). The reality is that the movie starts off by immediately presenting a challenge, along with sense of mystery and someone who takes charge and gets things started. It's easy to just toss out the word "boring," without actually explaining how or why the scene is boring, beyond some sarcastic remark that ignores everything that the opening scene was actually about.

Stoklasa then goes on a ridiculous nitpick spree, criticizing the circular shape of the Trade Federation ship, the **"flat angle"** that the camera was pointed in for one seconds-long shot of the characters walking into a room (really?), and how Obi-Wan and Qui-Gon are given some tea. Stoklasa claims that he was **"bored already,"** sounding like an impatient child as we're only about a minute into the movie.

But the scene that he described would be boring...because he left out all of the best and actually significant parts parts. Such as the Trade Federation leaders being terrified of the Jedi, comically sending a surprised protocol droid out instead. Or the hologram of the evil Lord Sidious, who looks and talks just like the Emperor from the original trilogy (and has the same theme music just to make that clear). Sidious is harsh and cocky, putting down the Trade Federation's cowardly second-in-command: **"Viceroy, I don't want this stunted slime in my sight again."** He also quickly reveals his powerful influence over the Republic itself:

Viceroy: My Lord, is [the invasion] legal?

Sidious: I will make it legal.

The Dark Lord immediately oozes confidence and power. The very things that many people say they want to see in villains. But no, none of these nice little bits were worth mentioning, if you go by Stoklasa's description of the scene. It was just a couple of bored guys sitting around and drinking tea or something...

1:00

Stoklasa compares the opening of TPM to the opening shot of the first movie, *Episode IV: A New Hope* (ANH). He claims that ANH's opening was way better because it conveyed information more quickly than TPM did, using a great visual. Specifically, the Imperial Star Destroyer's massive size advantage over the fleeing Rebel ship, which showed the power difference between the two sides of the war.

Yes, ANH's opening visual is a classic. But carefully read the meaning in the sentences above: Rebels weak, Empire strong. Wow, that's some real depth of information, isn't it? RLM claims that **"we know everything that we need to know just from the visuals."** Yeah, we knew everything that we needed to know...which is why ANH has resorts to exposition later on, such as the scene in Obi-Wan's hut where he tells Luke (and the audience) about everything.

This is the information that we get from TPM's beginning scenes which Stoklasa is bashing:

- The Trade Federation is sneaky and cowardly.
- Obi-Wan is young and inexperienced. He's conservative and falls back to mindlessly repeating the teachings of older Jedi who are in a position of authority over himself: **"But Master Yoda said to be mindful of the living Force."** Despite how underused Obi-Wan is in this movie, this point comes up later in TPM and has an effect on the later prequels as well.
- In comparison, Qui-Gon is more experienced and independent in his thinking, and has a more nuanced understanding of things.
- The Jedi have a fearsome reputation, and their very presence is enough to make the Trade Federation consider surrendering.
- Lord Sidious is in a conspiracy with the Trade Federation. In addition, Sidious has a great deal of secret power over the Republic itself.

The ANH scene that Stoklasa brought up is shorter because it says far less. Stoklasa isn't even talking about a scene. He's literally comparing an opening shot that conveys

nothing more than "Empire strong" to several minutes of scenes that provide much more information about the various characters and factions in TPM. So the comparison is silly and unfair. His entire presentation of TPM's scenes, which just so happens to leave out all the important parts, gives me the impression that he's being dishonest in what he chooses to talk about.

By the way, TPM's first action scene comes about five minutes in, and that's with the trademark opening crawl counted as part of the run time. I mean wow, 5 whole minutes before the shooting and slicing begins. Who ever saw a movie like that?

1:55

Stoklasa talks about how the original *Star Wars* movie had classic archetypes, before comparing it to the Special Editions and prequels. He shows a brief clip of producer Rick McCallum describing the visual effects of the new movies:

McCallum: "every single image has so many things going on."

If you actually watch that clip of McCallum saying the above line in context, you would see that he was praising the complexity of the effects. But Stoklasa is using it to make this point instead: that the newer movies stuff way too much distracting crap onto the screen. And he's right, in some ways. For example he shows the Special Edition of ANH, which has an inserted CGI dinosaur blocking the screen for a second in the middle of old footage. But I also dispute his claim, as applied to other scenes. Stoklasa also shows a few seconds-long clips of prequel battles with tons of battledroids, as an example of too much crammed into the screen. Well, that's just his opinion I guess. Although it's clear that those battles were supposed to look big, and that the size of those battledroid forces looks just like the big armies in various historical epics. Which those their square troop formations and synchronized marching were supposed to emulate.

2:58

Plinkett: "So the film is called *The Phantom Menace*, and by the nature of the story there is no clear villain."

It's a fair point. There are clear villains, but I can understand what he's getting at here. Sidious is clearly a villain, but stays mostly offscreen and shrouded in mystery. The Trade Federation are just patsies. But then he goes on to say...

Plinkett: "How about a bad guy in the movie whose motivations are clear?"

3:42

Thus begins his next section, "**Death and Space Taxes.**" Here Stoklasa asks a numerous stupid questions while complaining that he didn't understand the plot. A plot that wasn't very complex at all.

But first, he points out an inconsistency: Obi-Wan is promoted to Jedi Knight (after being called Padawan throughout the movie), despite being called a Jedi Knight in the opening crawl. Fair point, albeit nitpicky.

4:23

Now, onto Stoklasa's questions about the plot:

Plinkett: "So the Jedis are there to do what exactly? According to the opening title crawl, it was to settle a dispute over the taxation of trade routes. So what makes the Jedi Knights experts in intergalactic trade laws."

Actually, the opening crawl states that they were sent to "**settle the conflict.**" The problem is not the taxes but the blockade, because by then the opening crawl had already switched to the blockade, stating that the Chancellor sent the Jedi in secret because the Republic Congress was useless and just "**endlessly debates**" without resolving "**this alarming chain of events**" (the blockade).

But OK, maybe he didn't read the text very closely (despite making a rambling 70-minute video review). The dialogue and character actions were enough to tell you what the Jedi are there for anyway. But we're still on the opening scenes, and Stoklasa apparently didn't pay attention to anything important there despite taking the time to whine about the circular shape of the spaceships. Qui-Gon states that "**the negotiations will be short,**" because the Trade Federation are a bunch of "**cowards.**" The Trade Federation's second-in-command is indeed a coward, telling Lord Sidious "**the blockade is finished,**" and "**we dare not go against the Jedi.**" See, if you were paying attention, you would have understood that the Jedi were there to put an end to the blockade, and were probably sent because the Trade Fed was afraid of them.

Both sides were aware of that, but Stoklasa apparently wasn't. Despite having the time to splice together a near movie-length review, he couldn't be bothered to process two or three brief lines that clearly showed what the Jedi were sent there to do.

4:40

Plinkett: "So the Trade Federation have set up a blockade around Naboo, in order to stop them from getting space supplies. Which instantly causes some kind of crisis, that we never see [screech stop]...OK, I don't get it."

One praise for the RLM review that I've seen on various message boards is how well-edited the video is. However, these editing tricks are annoying and embarrassing when used to draw attention to points that are just plain stupid and wrong. Here's an example of it. Stoklasa screeches the sound to a stop as if he's making some kind of clever point here, when in fact he's not.

Seriously, he doesn't seem to understand why a blockade would cause a crisis, and asks what that crisis is as if there's some kind of story that needs to be told about it. This is simply unbelievably. A blockade shuts down trade, as he points out. That obviously hurts a society, and at the very least a military blockade is a violation of their sovereignty.

5:24

Plinkett: "So if the Trade Federation were like merchants, moving goods and services around the galaxy, then why do they seem more like a military, with armies of robots."

The evil corporation is a common movie cliché. Many scifi stories take that idea even further, with companies that are so powerful that they own private armies.

Furthermore, the movie makes it clear that the Trade Federation controls physical territory and has Senate representation. They're another planetary government within the Republic, just like the Naboo. It's not like governments don't take part in business.

5:34

Plinkett: "However, if they were like a bureaucracy, that was in charge of overseeing and regulating trade routes, you'd think they'd be happy about the whole new space taxes."

Here, Stoklasa actually speculates that the Trade Federation might be an agency of the Republic's central government. Sorry, but this is astoundingly dumb. If they were a government agency, they'd be working for the government. You know, those guys called "**the Senate**" or "**the Chancellor**." There was never any mention of them being a Republic government agency gone rogue. If they were a Republic agency, then the Chancellor would not be sending "**ambassadors**" to "**negotiate**" with them. The

opening crawl in fact describes the Trade Federation as "**greedy**," and it's mentioned a bit later that they have a "**trade franchise**." This suggests that they have a business interest in this, not some nonsense about trying to enforce tax laws.

Stoklasa has time to make all this silly speculation, but he doesn't mention the easy explanation that actually works: That the Trade Federation is reliant on trade, and the taxes on trade routes are negatively affecting them. They're blockading Naboo as a protest to the Republic government. This idea instantly entered my fourteen-year-old mind as I was reading the opening crawl for the first time in the theater. But RLM, adult fanboy, can't seem to understand it.

But you know what? Let's assume for the sake of analysis that part of Stoklasa's suggestion is correct. Let's assume that the Trade Federation is the one passing taxes here, despite the intuitive conclusion being that taxes on trade routes are harmful to the Trade Federation. So the Trade Federation passes oppressive tariffs over goods entering territory that they control (again, it's explicitly mentioned in the movie that they control territory). In real life, things like this can lead to similar taxes being passed in retaliation, kicking off "trade wars" with other governments...which sounds a lot like the "**trade dispute**" explicitly mentioned in this movie. You hear about this kind of stuff between say, China and the West, even if you just casually skim through the news on occasion. In this scenario, the Naboo government could be the one protesting the taxes, by passing their own sanctions in retaliation or even pushing for the Republic Senate to make a ruling against the Trade Federation's taxes. The Trade Federation could then blockade Naboo under the reasoning of defending its own interests. The Naboo government would be forced to cease its opposition and sign a treaty acknowledging the validity of the taxes and promising to abide by them.

That's not what happened, but it is another mostly viable explanation; which fits with the movie far more than Stoklasa's ridiculous and entirely unsupported suggestion that the Trade Federation is a government agency of the Republic's. And no, I don't expect anyone to think through all of this economic stuff while watching the movie. But while watching the movie, all you really have to know is that taxes are causing trouble. Anybody in the United States (the country where *Star Wars* originated) should know damn well that taxes can lead to conflicts; that is made clear in just about any public school's teaching of the American Revolution.

None of this tax stuff is even focused upon by the movie except in single sentences that do nothing but briskly mention it. That's because the taxes are a mere MacGuffin, a motivating element of a nature that's totally unimportant to the actual plot of the movie. As I explained in the paragraphs above, this tax MacGuffin can work either way, no

matter who was passing the taxes and who was opposing them. Besides that, all the audience for this movie has to know is that the "**greedy**" Trade Federation is bullying the Naboo. Because a blockade is clearly a hostile and escalating act.

Stoklasa nitpicks the MacGuffin, and then fails to provide a competent analysis of it. Instead, he just shoots off some ridiculous half-assed guesses and complains about how it doesn't make sense to him.

5:48

Stoklasa tries to cover his ass with some statements about how he shouldn't have to read obscure Star Wars Expanded Universe novels or comic books in order to understand the movie. Yes, the movie should stand alone. No, I didn't need to read any spin-off merchandise at all to understand this movie, so this is nothing but an excuse for his lousy analysis.

6:30

Time wasting skit where Plinkett goes off topic and pretends he's a murderer (and rapist?) in some dingy basement. This goes on for over a minute.

7:53

After he's done playing psycho, he reiterates his stupid questions and goes over the opening scenes again. No, not the least bit decompressed.

Plinkett: "what the blockade was about, who was getting taxed"

Again, I will repeat things for Plinkett and the slow-learners out there: They are the Trade Federation with a trade franchise, and there are taxes on trade routes. Put two and two together. Alternately, it doesn't even matter who was getting taxed.

RLM: "What kind of supplies were so crucial to the Naboo? What was it like, medical supplies? "Was there some kind of plague? Did they not have the capacity to survive on such a lush planet with a huge power reactor for one DAY without space trade? See, I would've accepted the idea of a mystery villain if the basics were at least clear."

Look, here he is creating his own problems and mysteries again when there doesn't have to be any. Stoklasa is basically just making up the need for the Naboo to be denied some specific, all-important supply that's explained by the plot, when any idiot out there can understand the concept that being blockaded is bad. If a fleet of Chinese warships were to blockade Taiwan, would any normal person on the street be asking

what specific product is being denied to the Taiwanese? Would anybody raise questions about the significance of the blockade, if the Taiwanese can go **"one day"** without collapsing? No, because the big story that everyone would actually care about is the blockade itself, and whether it could lead to war.

Stoklasa goes over the opening scenes again, finally showing some of the things that he conveniently left out the first time around while declaring the scene **"boring"** and focusing on such nitpicky crap such as the flat camera angle in one shot that lasted a few seconds.

He points out how the droid that identified Qui-Gon and Obi-Wan as Jedi may have jumped the gun. The two of them were wearing Jedi robes, but other *Star Wars* characters who weren't Jedi have also worn robes (some of Stoklasa's examples weren't exactly robes). It's nitpicky, but overall a fair point I guess. It could be that robes are commonly associated with Jedi and aren't normally worn by most people in the galaxy, except on poor backwater worlds like Tatooine. But whatever.

9:22

Another irrelevant, off-topic skit where he pretends that he's going insane, and loses the ability to piece together coherent thoughts.

Part 3

Stoklasa continues his nitpicky and incredibly inept dissection of the movie's plot. In this part, he says some of the most shockingly stupid things that I have ever read.

0:00

Plinkett: "Now this is where it gets complex, my lovelies. So I think this is what happened, I'm not sure. But Palpatine wanted to create a crisis on Naboo, so that the naive young queen would propose a vote of no confidence for Chancellor Valorum. This would lead to Palpatine getting elected in his place, right? Like I mean, that's the plot? I think? So how does killing the Jedi or creating a communications blackout even get word back to the crisis that there is a crisis?"

Here, we have another example of bad, lazy analysis. Once again, Stoklasa creates problems that don't have to exist, while ignoring or failing to realize the easy answers that are already available.

The cowardly Trade Federation was ready to surrender and end the blockade once they got word that the "ambassadors" were actually Jedi. Sidious had to tell them to fight, because if they didn't fight then the whole scheme would end right then and there.

The communications jamming is also easily explained. Sidious could have ordered the jamming, to buy the Trade Federation time until it got the Queen to sign an unequal treaty. A treaty that would nonetheless give them the legal loophole they would need to avoid quick punishment. Jamming the communications however does not mean that the Senate is unaware that there's a crisis; a member world that was already under blockade would be entirely cut off from so much as talking to others. Jamming creates an absence of communication which is obviously noticeable and undesirable. But even with something fishy obviously going on, the jamming could keep the details of the invasion obscured enough that the (corrupt and useless) Senators won't take immediate action. It also still allows Palpatine to put on an extended show as he "fights" the corruption and garners sympathy for being such a hero to his people.

0:35

Plinkett: "the Senate wanted to send an independent team to investigate whether or not the invasion was real."

What the hell...did Stoklasa just say that? He doesn't mention that the investigation is suggested by the Trade Federation's representative. The clear implication is that the

"investigation" wasn't supposed to genuinely determine whether an invasion had occurred, but was rather intended to waste time and buy the villains more time. No doubt the "investigators" would be on the take from the Trade Federation. More blatant dishonesty (or honest but unbelievably incompetent analysis, pick one) from Stoklasa. This is the big geek hero that fanboys are holding up for his supposedly wonderful insight?

0:45

Plinkett: "I guess the testimony of two Jedi Knights wasn't good enough. Those were the guys that Valorum trusts enough to settle the whole dispute in the first place? That don't make sense."

He leaves out the important fact that the Jedi did not testify at the Senate hearing, nor did Valorum even bring them up. It was shown, onscreen, that Valorum didn't make further arguments beyond a few initial statements because of the blue alien advisor whispering advice into his ear. The same blue alien advisor whom Palpatine pointed out as corrupt, and under the payroll of the Trade Federation.

Why does Valorum take this crap? It's explicitly stated onscreen that he's weak, and mired in accusations of corruption. The other politicians have him by the neck, and he's too scared to stand up for himself. So a guy who's already in trouble and hanging by a thread, who has been advised to shut up, and who's so unpopular that the Senators jump at the chance to vote him out of office, is supposed to admit that he circumvented proper procedures and secretly (possibly illegally) sent some Jedi to strongarm the Trade Federation? Oh yeah, admitting to improper secret actions will REALLY make those allegations of corruption go away...

0:56

Plinkett: "So anyways, when, when the guys told Palpatine that the Jedis were there, he should've said this:"

Stoklasa's Sidious Imitation: "Tell the Jedi that there will be no negotiations. Tell them that you plan to invade the planet next. And then send them back to Coruscant to inform the Senate."

Plinkett: "Instead he tells them to do the exact opposite of what will help his plan. Like he wanted [Queen Amidala] to sign the treaty, right?...He seemed really intent on having her sign the treaty to make the invasion legal. So what if she was like a total coward and then actually signed the treaty? Like right away?

Then the crisis would be over and there would be no need for a vote of no confidence. See what I mean, this sounding like an eight-year-old wrote it?"

Stoklasa once again provides laughable analysis, that either ignores or fails to think of the straightforward answers to his own questions.

This guy seriously thinks that Sidious should've told the Trade Federation to admit their plans to the Jedi, and not even bother trying to cover their tracks...The whole point of the cover up and treaty was to shield the Trade Fed from the law so that they would be willing to go along with Sidious's plan and fight. Stoklasa seems to think that Sidious should've neglected these protective measures and told the Trade Federation to sacrifice themselves for nothing in return.





Get out of here,
you idiot. Time for
some adult writing.



Tell the Jedi that there will be
no negotiations. Tell them that you plan to
invade the planet next. And then send them back
to Coruscant to inform the Senate.



But will that be...legal?



And again, the Jedi were obviously sent there to help Naboo by providing intimidation. The Trade Federation's frightened second-in-command tells Sidious himself that "**the blockade is over**" because the Jedi are there. Now, what do you think the Jedi are going to do if you tell them to screw off, and that you're going to invade the planet that they're trying to help? They could walk off back to the Chancellor like Stoklasa suggests...or they could fight like they actually did in the movie. Only in Stoklasa's scenario the decision to fight is available for the Jedi to make on their own, and they won't be taken by surprise because they've just been warned of the Trade Fed's intentions.

Finally, what kind of unbelievable ignorance does it take to believe that a crisis is over the moment a treaty is signed? War-ending treaties are just the formal way for one group to violently impose its will on another. Everybody should be able to understand that. The Nazis got treaties out of the people they invaded, was that OK and tolerated by other nations? Even after a treaty is signed, Palpatine would still be able to point out the Trade Federation's aggression, as well as the stupid lawyer crap that they're using to escape prosecution. He could present himself as the lone man fighting for justice against a bunch of other, useless politicians who refuse to stand up and do something to save Naboo.

Simply put, a treaty would probably create an extended crisis, one which the Republic government would struggle to resolve because the Trade Federation would have legal loopholes, and a treaty that would likely have the Naboo "admitting" that they were the ones at fault. An extended crisis gives Palpatine the chance to build up sympathy and make himself look better. Now, if Queen Amidala shows up Coruscant (as she actually

does later in the movie), Palpatine would no longer be the highest-ranking Naboo official on the planet. He would lose a degree of control over the situation, and his plan would then be contingent on persuading Amidala to turn on her good friend Valorum and throw him under the bus. Also, there are now others there to speak for Naboo, with more evidence. This could potentially end the crisis sooner, and with less credit for that going to Palpatine himself.

...You really have to be nitpicking to even analyze all of this so much. But if you're going to nitpick, then at least do it well. RLM brings the picky attitude, but he doesn't bring the intelligence and true depth of analysis that *ought* to come with good nitpicking. When you get so picky and delve so far into the nitty gritty, it just looks stupid when you can't even think things through correctly.

1:40

Plinkett: "So anyways, it's time to kill off the Jedi...oh good. How do they go about it? Well, they start pumping in an obvious deadly white gas into the room. This alerts them to danger. Well actually, blowing up their ship does...should've pumped in the gas first, then after the Jedis are dead, then blow the ship up?"

If you actually watch the movie, you can hear the gas leaking into the conference room just seconds after the ship is blown up. It was a coordinated attack. Way to nitpick there.

Stoklasa also nitpicks about how the gas wasn't of the odorless and colorless variety. Who the hell cares? It's a movie, people expect to see things.

2:12

Plinkett: "Also, moments earlier the Jedi willingly drank tea that was given to them."

Qui-Gon: "I sense an unusual amount of fear for something as trivial as this trade dispute."

Plinkett: "Hey, you guys got any rat poison lying around? Put it in the tea! Put it in the tea!"

Once again, Stoklasa tries to create a problem out of nothing. In scene immediately prior to that, Qui-Gon said "I don't sense anything," that "**these Federation types are cowards,**" and that "**the negotiations will be short.**"

Qui-Gon outright stated that he didn't pick up on any scheme. He also thinks of the Trade Federation as a bunch of wimps, and thought that things would be wrapped up without much trouble. He didn't expect anything and was complacent.

So when the tea is brought in, the only thing he said is that he sensed "an unusual amount of fear." That's all he said, while calmly staying seated. So the Trade Fed that he already thought of as cowardly was somewhat more nervous and cowardly. Not exactly an observation that immediately leads to "they're trying to kill us."

Jedi precognition obviously isn't one-hundred percent...which is ignoring the fact that at that point in the movie, the Trade Federation had not yet decided to kill them. The tea was sent out before the Viceroy even contacted Sidious. Only after Sidious appears does he tell the Viceroy to kill the Jedi.

2:34

Plinkett: "So anyways, then the dioxisin starts filling up the room, and then..."

Qui-Gon: "Dioxis."

Plinkett: "Hey wait a minute, how does Qui-Gon know what kind of gas it is before he smells it? Isn't that like a contradiction?"

From the context, "**Dioxis**," is probably some fictional poison gas. When you see that stuff pouring into the room right after your ship is blown up, it's obvious that it's poison. Qui-Gon might have just stated the name of a commonly-known type of poison gas in the Star Wars universe, to immediately get the point across. What's he supposed to do, not err on the side of caution and scream poison gas in the seconds that he and Obi-Wan have before it engulfs them?

In real life, if someone sees white gas being shot off during a riot, it's not hard to guess that it's tear gas. Similarly, if someone sees white powder leaking out of a suspicious package in the mail room, he's not going to wait to figure out if it's talcum powder. He's going to be screaming about a possible anthrax attack. Yet another nitpicky attempt to create problems that don't have to exist.

3:13

Plinkett: "So anyways, it's like the Jedi know that the droids are gonna open up the door in a very short time before they run out of breath. Because they don't immediately start trying to cut their way out."

Hmm, perhaps the Jedi, knowing that "**dioxis**" usually achieves quick results, and concentrating their psychic powers, detected that droids were on the way already? Again this guy tries to nitpick and make up another problem that doesn't have to exist.

3:31

Plinkett: "Then the dumbest line in the movie is said:"

Viceroy: "They must be dead by now. Destroy what's left of them."

Plinkett: "What does that mean? Hey asshole! Why don't you leave the door closed for like four hours. And then if they try to cut through the door, start shooting them in the face. Then pump in more gas, and keep pumping it in."

Another nitpick. "**They must be dead by now**" implies that the Jedi had already been left in that room for a period as long as, or perhaps a bit longer, than the gas usually takes to kill someone. The Viceroy thought that the Jedi were dead. So a movie villain underestimated the heroes, in an early fight. Uh...OK?

4:11

Plinkett: "So they open the doors anyways. And they let the Jedi out, and attack them with completely useless robots. Just tell them to leave, and that you don't want to negotiate. And then when their ship flies out of your spacedock, SHOOT it with lasers!"

What the hell? The Trade Fed didn't open the door to let the Jedi out as if they decided to fight them. They thought the Jedi were already dead. And the Jedi were the ones who were attacking. As the Trade Federation's second-in-command put it:

TF #2: "I knew it. They're here to force a settlement."

Stoklasa's suggestion is just bizarre. Does he really think that the Jedi would just kindly leave after an attempt on their lives, through a controlled docking bay where their previous ship had just been blown up?

4:26

Plinkett: "Also we need to consider the fact that killing two Jedi who were sent there as peaceful ambassadors would be a pretty heinous crime in the eyes of the Galactic Senate. An organization that runs everything, including space taxes. I mean, you could just claim that they never got there...but now you've got the burned wreckage of their ship, inside your horribly burned docking bay."

It's called a cover-up. And in the midst of all this nitpicking, Stoklasa doesn't consider easy answers such as the (clearly criminal) Trade Federation:

- Cleaning up the wreckage and disposing of it.
- Claiming that the wrecked ship was theirs, and was destroyed in an accident.
- Denying everything and wasting time, while refusing entry onto the ship for any more personnel from the Republic.
- Moving the freaking ship elsewhere.

4:53

The review goes into a new section, **"Who's Doing What? Where? Why?"**

Plinkett: "Why are the [Trade Federation] taking orders from this mystery hologram again? What did he promise them that would be so worth risking their entire organization for? The location of the Fountain of Youth? A planet made of gold?" ... "Seriously, what was it? Oh, we're never told are we?"

First few seconds of the opening crawl says the Trade Federation is hoping to resolve their tax problem. Is this guy so dumb that he needs a cheat sheet or something? The movie already wrote it all out onscreen.

5:39

Plinkett: "Darth Sidious can't really promise them future political favors, because it would give away who he is."

I love how he just makes an unsupported claim like this and states it as fact. It's stupid to assume that any political favor Sidious can do for them would have to be done personally, in his true identity of Palpatine. That's because the Galactic Senate is later shown to be a huge, corrupt network, with politicians already bought off, or persuaded by the threat of accusations against them. All of which occurs behind the scenes. Palpatine can influence Senators with middlemen or even anonymously-delivered messages and rewards.

6:02

Another section comes, this one titled **"I can't put enough quotation marks around the word 'story' so I won't try."**

TF henchman: "Sir, they've gone up the ventilation shaft."

Plinkett: "How do you know that? I said how do you know that? Answer me, thing-in-the-mouth face!"

Another lame nitpick. Because ships don't have security cameras and sensors, or another droid couldn't have seen them...

6:22

Plinkett: "Anyways, Obi-Wan and Qui-Gon they end up in the hangar bay somehow, where the droid armies are being staged for an invasion. Why don't the Jedis just start fighting all of them, then steal a ship and head back to Coruscant to tell the Galactic Senate what's going on. It's not so crazy because later in the film they attempt to run the blockade and they make it through. The fact that they even tried that makes this a possible option."

Read that quote. Seriously, read it. Take time to process the utter insanity involved in saying something like that. While nitpicking the plot and pretending to be a smart tactician, Stoklasa actually suggests a plan contingent upon **"fighting all of them."** Yes, this guy actually thought it would be smarter for the two Jedi to come out in the open and fight an entire army. That's just inconceivable, even by the standards of action movie heroes. Maybe not for Rambo, who must be the inspiration behind such a dumb statement. But while it's been a long, long time since I've seen a Rambo movie, I don't remember even *him* acting so stupidly bold.





The Royal Starship they later escape the blockade with was small and fast. The Jedi got that ship on the planet's surface, without having to fight as many guards all at once. Stoklasa also conveniently left out the fact that Queen Amidala (whom the bad guys needed to sign the treaty) was on that ship. There's evidence that the Trade Fed wasn't shooting to kill then, because they were picking off small repair droids instead blasting the ship itself. None of which even needs to be brought up, because whatever they did with the Royal Starship came later in the movie and thus didn't figure into the Jedi's decision-making, at that moment.

On the other hand, the ships that Stoklasa suggests the Jedi steal are huge, lumbering landing craft surrounded by battledroids, and being filled with even more. How fast does he think they can seize control of one of these big ships? When they reveal themselves, they'll be swarmed. The last time we saw the Jedi, about a minute ago, they were running away! And assuming that they can defeat the droid legions and steal a ship, how would they escape with it? The Trade Federation would have long been alerted that one of its own landing ships had been hijacked, and will blast it. The stolen ship would be coming out of an even bigger ship, at point blank range to its guns and tractor beams.

...Great plan. Somebody send this guy to Afghanistan, I bet he'd have the Taliban wrapped up within a week.

6:49

Plinkett: "But instead Qui-Gon in all his wisdom thinks it's a better idea to go down with the army to quote 'warn the Naboo.'...Hey genius, if you're going down with the army, don't you think it's a little late to warn them about the army? And what the fuck are the Naboo going to do anyways? They don't even have a real army, just volunteers."

Because it's impossible for the Trade Federation to land its bulky landing craft outside the city first, to unload and organize their forces before making their attack? Possibly flying around the Naboo's defensive systems, which would probably be focused in their cities? The Naboo's defenses are weak but they did have fighter ships, as shown later in the movie.

And really, even if Qui-Gon's plan isn't perfect, it's a HELL of a lot better than revealing themselves and going Rambo, as Stoklasa so ridiculously suggested.

7:30

Plinkett: "Anyways, so then for no reason they decide to stow away on different ships...Is this guy a ****ing retard?"

Yeah, because when you're outmatched and want to sneak out, you shouldn't try to minimize your presence in one spot or make it so that one guy can survive even if the other one is caught. Stoklasa goes on to list a few reasons why splitting up would be a bad thing. But again he either ignores, or fails to think of the easy answers, such as the ones I just mentioned at the beginning of this paragraph. More horrible analysis from a guy who thinks that he's far smarter than he actually is.

7:46

Plinkett: "This is a minor thing, but what would going down on the planet on separate ships accomplish? Let's think about this. Number one: increase the chances of getting caught by one-hundred percent."

Or increase the enemy's requirements to catch both of you by 100%.

7:57

Plinkett: "Two: Have no one else to help you if you get caught and get into a fight with robots."

We saw the two Jedi's combined fighting power before, in a scene just a minute ago in the movie. They were able to beat down a squad of regular battledroids, before getting fought to a standstill by two Droidekas. Their combined fighting power didn't count for jack when it came to dealing with so many droids, all at once. Oops, I almost forgot that this is the brilliant tactician who thinks "**just start fighting all of them**" is a sensible course of action.

8:02

Plinkett: "Three: Increase the possibility of getting separated by hundreds, if not thousands of miles by not knowing where the other craft is going to land on the planet."

Maybe, just maybe, the Jedi prioritized redundancy, survival, and having SOMEONE live to perform the mission, over sticking together for big fights that they wouldn't choose to engage in anyway.

8:15

Plinkett: "Then although the reason for them going down to the planet was to warn the Naboo about the army, they decide to follow [Jar Jar] underwater. Why? Why not just keep moving towards the Naboo city?"

Jar Jar brought up his "**safe**" and "**hidden**" Gungan city, and Qui-Gon opted to go there for help. Stoklasa, in his shallow and single-minded analysis, argues that this is a stupid inconsistency just because Qui-Gon didn't go directly to the Naboo city. Hmm, maybe Qui-Gon rightfully predicted that the newly brought-up Gungans might have something that could be useful, such as troops, communications devices, or at least vehicles for quicker transportation? Stoklasa, master tactician and plot critic that he is, thinks it would've been smarter to ignore this potential source of help and walk to the Naboo city on foot, all while having to avoid being seen by the Trade Fed's army.

Imagine a guy named John, who drove deep into the wilderness for a camping trip. Only after he got there, psychotic woodsmen destroyed his car and tried to shoot him. John manages to lose them, for the time being. As he walks the dozens of miles he needs to go to get back home, he comes across James. James won't be able to help in a fight, but he comes from a camp full of other people just a few minutes away. Now, John has the following choices:

- a) Go to the camp for help.
- b) Keep walking home by himself.

Which one would YOU pick? If John picks "b," then he deserves to be killed by the psychos, so that his epic stupidity will be removed from the human gene pool. Even with all of its flaws, society does not raise people to be this dumb. Even basic animal instincts should guide you well enough to avoid decisions like this...

Which is why I have a hard time believing Stoklasa is even honest in his criticism. I think that he's just throwing any crappy criticism out there, hoping that enough negative sentiment from the sheer mass of words will end up sticking in the minds of unthinking people. I suspect that he's just too lazy and careless to say things without making a fool of himself.

8:50

Plinkett: "This is also the point where the movie starts to officially fall apart."
(referring to the choice to seek help from the hidden Gungan city)

What, it wasn't falling apart before, as suggested by his nitpicks? But consistency and logic aren't Stoklasa's priorities, apparently. He just wants to keep piling on the dramatics.

Plinkett: (continuing) "This is the moment, when the Star Wars saga is now totally damaged beyond repair. The lapses in common sense and logic begin to compound on the movie, and now it is broken."

Let me reiterate, he is still talking about Qui-Gon's choice to seek help from the Gungan city, rather than walk through swamps and battledroids to reach the Naboo city on foot. He's adjusting his plan to try to take advantage of a newly-introduced factor. Wow, what big "lapses in common sense."

9:10

Some sick, off topic joke about running over a Korean family (complete with tortured screams) end Part 3.

Part 4

As if he didn't nitpick it enough already, Stoklasa goes *back* and nitpicks the details and motivations behind the invasion again.

0:00

A new section, entitled "**Invasion! Of boring.**" starts here.

Naboo Governor: "A communications disruption can only mean one thing: invasion."

Plinkett: "So the Naboo seem to be on the case about this thing. The old guy seems to know what's going on. And although they are a peaceful people with no army, this asshole seems to be an expert on the process of planetary invasions."

Stoklasa once again grasps at straws in an attempt to create a plot hole. He doesn't consider that an invasion is a perfectly good guess when you've already been blockaded, and all your communications have just mysteriously gone offline. You don't need to be an expert or come from a warlike society to make *that* kind of an assumption. But as you should have realized by now, this guy is basically putting his own ignorance on display.

0:25

Plinkett: "So what exactly is the purpose of this invasion? It's almost like after Lucas wrote the invasion scenes, he didn't really know what to do next?"

Stoklasa asks some stupid questions about the invasion again, even though he had already beaten this subject to death in Part 3. Once again, he avoids mentioning the actual scenario that makes sense. Once again, he can't connect the dots between the Trade Federation, that's obviously in the trade business because of its trade franchise, which probably means that they don't appreciate taxes on trade routes. It was clear to me, starting from the opening crawl, that they were protesting with a show of force in the hoping for a removal of the taxes. Not that any of this tax stuff was even important, because as I said before it was a MacGuffin motivation anyway. Most people watching this movie were just fine knowing that the villains were some greedy businessmen, and that what was *actually* important was that they were picking on a small defenseless planet.

0:32

Plinkett: (continuing) "So he thought he'd make the Queen have to sign a treaty to make the invasion legal. I mean why not? First of all, forcing someone to sign a treaty sort of contradicts the purpose of a signature on a treaty. You might as well just forge it if you're gonna make her sign it."

And here, the clearly self-assured and nitpicky geek once again displays an ignorance of how things actually work. It's normal for the winning side to force a war-ending treaty on the loser.

What Stoklasa doesn't mention in his nitpick spree is that while people may know damn well that a treaty is forced, the fact that it is publicly acknowledged by both sides of a conflict will often grant it a degree of perceived "legitimacy." Possibly enough for others not to get involved, or to try to punish the Trade Federation for wrongdoing. Don't forget that Sidious had already mentioned the invasion as an extension of the blockade plan, and had assured the Trade Federation that he could "**make it legal**." The treaty, along with backstage politicking and legal obstructionism, are obviously the means by which he would protect the Trade Federation from legal prosecution. And that's without even mentioning what the treaty might have contained; for all we know Amidala may be required to "admit" that the Naboo were at fault or had provoked the invasion.

0:47

Plinkett: "So meanwhile, Qui-Gon Booze and Obi-Wan are in the underwater city. Qui-Gon is still talking about warning the Naboo that they're about to be attacked. When he really doesn't know that they are actually going to attack them"

Qui-Gon: "A droid army is about to attack the Naboo"

Plinkett: "Then since Qui-Gon is jumping to conclusions and making shit up, Obi-Wan starts doing it too."

What. The. Hell. My jaw just dropped when I got to this part of the review. Stoklasa once again says something that shows that he's just clearly in denial of what's actually happening. Qui-Gon doesn't know that the Trade Federation is attacking the Naboo? Really? The ability to recognize clear danger when it happens is a part of basic survival. Brain-dead thinking like this would get you eaten in the caveman days. I can only imagine how this guy thinks this scene should have played out...





before landing big floating tanks and thousands of battledroids...



Obi-Wan: "Once those droids take control of the surface, they will take control of you."

Plinkett: "First of all, the only thing that the Jedis know at this point is that they were sent to settle a trivial dispute about taxing trade routes. All of a sudden Obi-Wan thinks he knows the entire plan of the Trade Federation. How does he know they plan to take control of the surface, and the underwater city too?"

...is this guy for real? The Jedi were sent to force the Trade Federation into backing down! They already knew which side they were on. Obi-Wan is saying something in an attempt to persuade the uncaring Gungan leader to help! Yet Stoklasa, either out of unbelievable ignorance or intentional omission, doesn't mention that blatantly obvious truth. His alternative speculations for what the Trade Federation could've been doing on Naboo, other than invading, are amazing though...

1:29

Plinkett: "Maybe [the Trade Federation] just wanna steal some kind of priceless artifact from the Naboo. Maybe the Naboo did some kind of horrific act against the Trade Federation and they're just getting some revenge."

Just half a minute after calling out Qui-Gon for "**making shit up**," Stoklasa throws out his own ridiculous and wholly unsupported statements. Even *if* the Trade Federation were trying to steal some artifact (that doesn't exist and was never, ever mentioned), their army would still be invading! I mean, come on, it's not that difficult a concept. And now the Naboo might be the aggressors? I'd totally believe that that's what the Trade Federation would like for people to believe (and might have worked into their bogus treaty), but for someone external to the movie, in real life, to suggest that is just beyond stupid. We know for a fact that the Trade Federation is being "**greedy**" and is doing this to resolve its tax issues (stated in the opening crawl). The Jedi were clearly sent there not to act as impartial mediators without a clue as to who was actually at fault, but to negotiate against the Trade Federation. They also just escaped being murdered by the Trade Federation, before seeing the invasion army's landing! I think the Jedi understand who the bad guys in this situation were, at this point.

Stoklasa once again embarrasses himself here, saying things which must either stem from shameless dishonesty or unbelievable stupidity.

1:38

Obi-Wan: "[The Gungans] and the Naboo form a symbion circle. What happens to one of you will affect the other. You must understand that."

Plinkett: "Now what does that even mean?! How is a totally isolated city under water affected at all by the Naboo being attacked by droids on the complete other side of the planet?"

...He still doesn't understand that Obi-Wan is trying to persuade the Gungan leader into helping. But in the idiotic world of RLM, there's no such thing as persuasion. Just Obi-Wan standing there talking nonsense for no damn reason...people tend to assume that others act just like they do.

For anyone still too stupid to realize that the Jedi were trying to get the Gungans to help, consider the fact that they resort to a Jedi Mind Trick to secure that help in the same exact scene.

1:54

Plinkett: "Yes, I said the other side of the planet, because..."

Gungan Leader: "The speediest way to the Naboo is going through...(taking an ominous tone) the planet core."

Stoklasa takes what the Gungan leader says literally and runs with it, pointing out how the core would be far deeper, at the center of the planet under big molten layers. He also uses the Gungan submarine traveling through the "core" to question why the Trade Fed would have landed their troops on the other side of the planet.

All that...over one word spoken by a fat idiot from a backward society. Who was explicitly shown to be weak minded by Qui-Gon's successful use of a Jedi Mind Trick in that same scene. Who sounded like he was using a spooky nickname for the region that they'd be traveling through, to ratchet up tension. Spoken words are not to be taken literally all the time, and even if they were it was just a momentary thing.

2:53

Plinkett: "Inside the city, Queen Amidala has been captured by the green guys. But instead of forcing her to sign the treaty right then and there, or keeping her locked up inside the big capital building under heavy guard, they inexplicably send her away from them...Remember, this is the most important person in their whole plan. And they send her to be 'processed' in some place called 'Camp 4.'"

Yet another nitpick, where Stoklasa puts no effort into addressing any easy explanations before declaring the existence of a plot hole. Remember, this treaty is for

presentation to the Galactic Senate, and the signing of it will thus have to appear at least somewhat reasonable:

Viceroy: "The Queen and I will sign a treaty that will legitimize our occupation here. I have assurances that it will be ratified by the Senate."

Amidala flat out refuses to sign the treaty, saying **"I will not cooperate."** The Trade Federation Viceroy then replies by saying **"in time the suffering of your people will persuade you to see our point of view."**

So what is the Trade Fed supposed to do here, to get Amidala to sign the treaty **"right then and there"** the way RLM thinks they should? Hold a gun at her head? Killing her won't get her to sign the treaty, and both sides know that. Torture her? The whole treaty signing is supposed to be the nice public facade to explain away this invasion, so they won't be doing that to the Queen either.

In real life as well as *Star Wars*, treaty ratification clearly requires more than just the head of state's signature. The Senate must also vote in approval of it, and that approval is based on whether the senators believe that the signatory actually desires and benefits from that treaty. Now, as I write this essay in late 2010, the START treaty to reduce America and Russia's nuclear weapons has run into a roadblock in the US Senate. The START treaty had support on both sides, went through all the proper procedures, and was signed by Obama and Russian president Medvedev in full view of the media. And there are still problems with getting the Senate to ratify it. You could say that the treaty was stalled because of stupid politics, but that's something that the Republic Senate also has no shortage of.

Now, imagine if some staffer just showed up one day with a mysterious "treaty" that nobody had heard of before, with nothing but someone's "signature" scrawled on it. Which at best was signed hastily under the threat of force without the involvement of anyone else in the government, and at worst could be a total forgery...it's not hard to believe that the Trade Federation might have wanted to at least put up an appearance that the treaty signing had been done properly.

Nor does "Camp 4" even have to be that far away. If it's a few miles outside of the city, the Trade Federation could get there within minutes.

Stoklasa doesn't seem to understand any of the above, because he's apparently ignorant. He doesn't seem to understand much about how anything works, yet he sees fit to touch upon a variety of subjects.

It's also funny that he thinks that the palace is a great place to hold the Queen, even though the Trade Fed's forces had *just* rolled in. It's the Queen's house, in the middle of Naboo territory. A city potentially full of hostile forces. Someone without a full idea of the situation, such as Stoklasa, can't just decide that it's a secure and ideal place to keep her. Even a quick and seemingly easy conquest can be followed by an insurgency; in fact it's later stated onscreen that the Naboo security forces have organized a resistance.

3:25

Plinkett: "Oh, but at least they remember to send her with a whopping eight battledroids to protect them from the two Jedis that they just discussed they had not found yet."

Another attempt to create and play up mistakes. Yes, there were only a handful of battledroids walking next to Amidala and her friends. Stoklasa doesn't mention though that just 30 seconds before the Jedi rescue her, the Queen's group is walked past numerous other battledroids as well as a row of tanks. There are battledroids throughout the city; the Jedi are shown sneaking through the buildings to avoid them. Qui-Gon waited until Amidala's group was walked into a side street before intervening.

The Trade Federation also just has a general idea that the Jedi are on the planet; they didn't know how close to the Queen they actually are. It's not like they thought that the handful of droid escorts around the Queen would be ALL the Jedi would have to fight.

3:51

Plinkett: "You know, it really adds a lot of tension in the movie when the main enemy forces are totally ineffective."

I won't deny it, the Trade Fed's battledroids are far from the best evil foot soldiers in movie history. To be fair to them, they were around in enough numbers that the Jedi felt the need to sneak around rather than engage them directly. The Trade Federation has other units, such as the Droidekas, that were clearly strong enough to send the Jedi into retreat.

But yeah, the standard battledroids are weak, and their voices don't help things either. Criticizing them is a fair point.

4:08

A new section called "**Escape!! From the planet of boring**" starts.

Plinkett: "Okay, so they free the Naboo air force, and they get on a silver jet thing, to run through a blockade. Which again, I remind you, the point of a blockade is to stop ships from getting through. So Qui-Gon Jinn could've very easily gotten everyone killed."

So hero characters in an action movie show courage and confidence when facing unfavorable odds...that's just unheard of.

Stoklasa, in his attempts to find stupidity in *everything*, calls Qui-Gon an idiot for trying to escape the blockade. But don't forget that at 6:22 in Part 3, Stoklasa himself suggested that the Jedi "**just start fighting all**" of the battledroids, steal a ship, and escape the blockade. All while presumably fighting the numerous battledroids **onboard** the Trade Federation ships he thought they should've stolen.

No, that's not the least bit inconsistent...

4:41

Naboo Pilot: "Shield generator's been hit!"

Plinkett: "Ooh, then suddenly it's dangerous. Hey wait, just like knowing what kind of deadly gas it is before you smell it, how does the shield generator get hit while the shields are up?"

Stoklasa goes on grasping at straws to nitpick lines that are utterly harmless and common to any scifi movie. Did he consider that hey, maybe the shields were shot down by all the laser hits the ship was taken? Enough for a shot to get through, and physically damage the shield generator underneath? No, that's too simple and sensible to accept as an explanation...

Very short clips of the escape scene are flashed on the screen one after another, while "Plinkett" utters a bunch of confused sentence fragments as if the scene in the actual movie was in any way complicated. He doesn't have anything to actually say against it...basically the scene is supposedly dumb because he acts like an idiot while flashing clips from it.

Reminds me of how elementary school students tend to argue, by repeating the other person's words in a stupid voice.

5:15

STILL going on about the damaged shield generator...

Captain Panaka: "If we can't get the shield generator fixed, we'll be sitting ducks."

Plinkett: "Okay, wait. How will you be 'sitting ducks' without a shield generator? Are you implying that with the shield generator, you WOULDN'T be sitting ducks? That you would be able to breeze through this blockade somehow? Doesn't that defeat the purpose of a blockade if ANY ship with an operational shield generator would suddenly not be a sitting duck and could go through the blockade?"

...I can't even fathom what kind of stupidity went into the writing of this part of his review, carrying on and on over something as simple as the characters saying that their ship's shields are down. Energy shields are a concept that was well established in Star Wars already; how many Rebel pilots talked about their shields right before having their fighters blown to pieces? Obviously, shields offer protection but aren't invincible. How the hell does shields being helpful and desirable lead to Stoklasa's belief that with shields, "**ANY ship**" can "**breeze through**" a blockade? That's quite a leap in logic he's making there. This part of his review, more than even the others, gave me the impression that he's just dishonestly trying to create any "mistake" that he can. He seriously spends the better part of two minutes going on and on about the freaking shields.

5:46

Plinkett: "So anyways, R2-D2 sticks a thing in a thing and fixes the shield generator. Then the [pilot] says 'Deflector shields up at maximum.' Okay, so that suddenly relieves all the tension in the scene, and allows them to escape the blockade."

Uh, yeah, it was SUPPOSED to relieve the tension in the scene, seeing as how the heroes' Naboo ship escaped the blockade just seconds after the pilot says that. It was a triumphant statement to indicate that they had gotten past that obstacle.

6:00

Plinkett: "If you'll notice though, after the shields are back up at maximum, they don't get hit again. So really, R2 fixing the shield generator did nothing at all. Ma-Maybe it gave them the confidence to escape?"

I actually let this statement slide the first time I saw this part of the review. Then I decided to check the actual movie for verification. Unsurprisingly, Stoklasa is making things up once again. This is a screenshot of the shield generator's power display, right after R2 makes his repairs:



It turns from red to green, clearly indicating that power has been restored. As the pilot says, "**Power's back!**" After that, the movie switches to show the cockpit window:



As you can see, a laser makes a direct hit on the window, lighting up the cockpit. Seconds later, the cockpit is struck again by another laser:



Here is a shot right after the pilot declares "**Deflector shields up at maximum.**"



A moment later, we hear a crashing sound, the ship rocks, and we see the cockpit lighting up again from yet another laser hit:



But yeah, R2 really did nothing, according to Stoklasa's sloppy, dishonest analysis of this scene. He tries to present himself as an insightful person, but apparently he couldn't be bothered to observe what actually happened in the movie before opening his mouth and attempting to nitpick the visuals.

And you want to know what else is pathetic about this portion of his review? All of the above screenshots can be found in the same exact clips that Stoklasa used for this part of his review. Visuals from his own review directly shoot down what he's saying.

This is the kind of crap that he gets away with, up until someone actually puts in the effort to fact check him...God, I feel dirty for even closely addressing this ridiculous nitpicking. Even assuming that what he says here is correct, it would've had no effect on the plot. No normal person even thinks about this stuff while watching a movie.

6:12

Plinkett: "So after showing no emotion at all about the droids being picked off one by one, they inexplicably send R2 up to the Queen to get a pat on the head I guess. She thanks the little piece of equipment like it's a person. Hey nobody thank the ship, I think that did a lot more to help them escape...You see normal people don't think of droids as people. Even the kindhearted Luke Skywalker reacts with sarcasm when introducing himself to R2-D2...Would a Queen really thank a droid? [mumbling]...maybe. Again, this is a film for babies."

More like again, Stoklasa talks up self-created plot holes, spending the better part of a minute pointlessly nitpicking a little thing when there's nothing to actually talk about. Could it be that different people in *Star Wars* view droids differently? We have people who think they're tools, we have anti-droid bigots like the bartender in ANH ("**We don't serve their kind here!**"), and we also have people who DO treat them as sentient beings or even friends. Luke certainly showed concern for R2 later in Episode IV. As for the Queen, we have rich women who leave their fortunes to their freaking pet DOGS in real life. I mean wow, they're a little appreciative to the one droid that survived after saving them. Big whoop.

7:06

Plinkett: "Wait I gotta get this straight here, hold on. So, at this point, the queen in the middle that's wearing black is the decoy, but the real queen is Padmé is in the orange. So the handmaiden decoy then orders the Queen to go clean the droid?...Did Amidala ask to be sent off on a menial task prior to this so she could have a scene where she meets Jar Jar Binks? You'd think the real queen would wanna hang out in the throne room area to stay current on any updates on what's going on?"

Hmm, I don't know, maybe Padmé was asked to clean up the droid to help maintain her disguise? Maybe Padmé likes to be released from the prison of her elaborate makeup and dead-serious job once in a while, so that she can live like a normal person? Who cares? As for staying current on any updates, it's not like the decoy queen couldn't just call Padmé over, all the way from the other side of their small ship, if anything important came up later.

8:08

Another section, titled "**I'm Gonna Slit My Wrists**" starts.

Plinkett: "It's hard to stomach any more of this shit. I still don't know who the main character is and why I should care about any of this. At around this point in the original *Star Wars* movie, we've been with Luke almost the whole time getting to know him."

What a liar. The clips from TPM that he's using to define "**at around this point**" are the moments before the Naboo ship lands on Tatooine. That's about 29 minutes in. In the original *Star Wars*, Luke doesn't even appear until 17 minutes into the movie. Before that, we have a space battle filled with nameless grunts, before the movie focuses on R2-D2 of all characters. The movie even digresses into R2 being stalked by Jawas in the desert before being taken aboard their giant vehicle.

Stoklasa goes on to praise the original's focus on Luke, although he gives credit for developments that come later, such as the deaths of his aunt and uncle (at around 40 minutes). Those are some valid points, and many people will say that Luke was a much better lead character than anybody in TPM. But let's not exaggerate or ignore how things actually went. Such as how Stoklasa thinks that **"the whole time"** is the same as first appearing 17 minutes in. Although he's eager to play up any flaw in TPM, real or merely perceived, he glosses over the original movie while wearing rose-tinted glasses.

8:54

Plinkett: "And to top that we constantly have to question every single action that's taken by Qui-Gon, the 'wise' Jedi. Almost every single line of dialogue makes no sense."

Based on the quality of his questions thus far into the review ("**Why don't the Jedis just start fighting all of them**"), I see little reason to care about Stoklasa's opinion when it comes to the sensibility of Qui-Gon's actions.

9:05

A clip of Qui-Gon is shown, as he directs the ship's pilot to land in the desert, instead of outside of the Tatooine city.

Qui-Gon: "We don't want to attract attention."

RLM: "If you're trying to avoid drawing attention to yourself, then why are you taking Jar Jar Binks into the city with you?"

Fair point, although drawing attention to himself is not exactly the same as drawing attention to the gleaming Royal Starship with the Queen inside of it.

9:18

A clip of Qui-Gon speaking to Watto is shown.

Qui-Gon: "My droid has a readout of what I need."

This should be pretty simple and noncontroversial. Qui-Gon tells Watto that R2 has a list of all the parts that they need. Just a brief, straightforward line, surely there's no way that Stoklasa could spin this into more horribly off base analysis...oh wait.

Plinkett: "You say you took R2-D2 because he has the specs on the type of part you need? But yet Watto seems to know what you're talking about, and you have a thingie that shows it. R2 is never used for that purpose and does nothing at all."

Now, if you watch the actual scene, what "Watto seems to know" is actually the name of the type of ship ("**Nubian**"). And that "thingie" (which is pulled out in a later scene) is a small handheld device which displays a simple 3D hologram of the ship. Basically just a picture display, as far as we know. **Not the same thing as a "readout" of all the specific parts that they need**, as Stoklasa deceptively or stupidly tries to make out. That's like me whipping out a digital camera with a picture of a Toyota Camry, and expecting someone to know all of the parts inside of a Camry. And not just know the parts of a Camry, but the specific parts in my Camry that are damaged and need replacing!

After Qui-Gon tells Watto the type of ship he has, Watto takes him and R2 out back to look for parts. The movie stays with Anakin and Padmé inside the shop. More than a minute later the movie cuts to Qui-Gon, R2-D2, and Watto in the junk yard, where Watto talks names the specific type of hyperdrive generator that they need. It seems pretty obvious that R2 showed him the readout sometime over that unseen time period.

Yet another example of Stoklasa reaching hard in the search for more things to complain about. Yet another claim of his refuted by simple fact checking.

9:35

Plinkett: "The two most effective, clear-minded, logical guys [Obi-Wan and Captain Panaka] stay on the ship and wait."

Maybe to protect the supposed Queen, who also stayed on the ship?

Part 5

0:00

Another section begins, with a title so stupidly long that I'm not going to even bother typing it here. But Stoklasa does launch into some new points, which I will respond to:

Plinkett: "At this point I realize who The Phantom Menace is. No, it's not [George Lucas]. It's Qui-Gon Jinn. His character is totally baffling to me, and I do not know why he's in this movie."

Funny, because his role as the kindly father figure to Anakin was pretty clear cut. But as shown all the way back in Part 1, Stoklasa is so clueless (or dishonest) that he doesn't even TRY to describe Qui-Gon, and pretends as if nothing can even be said of him. Oh yeah, except for that laughably incorrect label of "**stern**."

Plinkett: (continuing) "If you ask me, Qui-Gon Jinn and Obi-Wan Kenobi should've been combined to form a new character, called 'Obi-Wan Kenobi.' Obi-Wan should've been the younger, eager, adventurous Jedi, who found Anakin, formed a bond with him, and then really wanted to train him in the Jedi arts when Yoda told him 'no.' Instead Obi-Wan, who seemed totally irritated with Anakin the whole movie, suddenly wants to train him at the end, only because Qui-Gon said to."

And because Stoklasa completely missed the clear character role that Qui-Gon played, he seems to totally miss the whole point of the movie, and indeed the trilogy.

The handling of Obi-Wan Kenobi in TPM was far from perfect, and I myself thought that he should've been given a much bigger part in this movie. But as I brought up before (on pages 16-17) TPM does establish some things about him, which are important when looking at the entire *Star Wars* series. Again, Obi-Wan is younger but ironically more conservative than his hippie mentor Qui-Gon. Unlike his free-thinking master, Obi-Wan is more comfortable working within the confines of the system, and he has a greater respect for the authority of the Jedi Council.

And as I explained before, Qui-Gon is a foil for him. Qui-Gon is the gentle, soft-spoken father figure who genuinely believes in his students/children, and is supportive of them. His methods of conflict resolution are completely different from the critical and uncompromising ways that Obi-Wan would use to deal with Anakin in AOTC. Qui-Gon is the nice guy that a lot of kids wanted their dad to be like. For a kid like Anakin, who

grew up without a real dad, Qui-Gon would come across as an "ideal" father figure. Of all the Jedi, Qui-Gon was the only one who truly believed in Anakin...but Qui-Gon dies prematurely. That's another devastating loss to Anakin, after already being taken away from the mother that he was so attached to.

Obi-Wan faithfully subscribing to the Jedi Council's opinions and doctrines, and being reluctant to train Anakin himself, are the reasons why he doesn't believe in his student in the later movies. He certainly didn't trust Anakin, and only trained him out of obligation to his deceased mentor. As a more conservative and authoritarian Jedi, Obi-Wan is stricter with Anakin, and comes down harder when his student defies him. If you're looking for someone to apply the word "**stern**" to, it's Obi-Wan in AOTC.

I'm going outside the scope of this review (which is about TPM) by mentioning this, but you can even see the themes and character arcs deepening even more when you take the prequels and continue on to the original trilogy. One of the themes of *Star Wars* is breaking free from the constraints of your parents to achieve your true potential. Obi-Wan was hardly a perfect father figure to Anakin, the Jedi Council is portrayed as stagnant and out of touch, Uncle Owen wanted to keep Luke tied down to the farm, and Vader wanted to turn Luke to the Dark Side. The father figures who *are* portrayed positively are the ones who guide their children, but also believe in them and encourage them to achieve greater things on their own. Like Qui-Gon. Or like how old Obi-Wan (lying aside) acted toward Luke. After the horrors that he faced in *Revenge of the Sith*, Obi-Wan realized the error of his ways:

Obi-Wan: "I have failed you Anakin. I have failed you."

Anakin failed because he gave in to his own poisonous fear and anger (another theme of the series), but that was exacerbated by Obi-Wan's strict attitude toward him.

So Obi-Wan goes to Tatooine, where he receives training from the ghost of Qui-Gon Jinn. It's clear that Obi-Wan mellowed out in his later years, and became more like his old master. Knowing better this time around, he mentored Luke differently, leading to Luke achieving great things.

...Anyway, that is the point of Qui-Gon's character, and why he was put into the movie. He's there as an example of what the Jedi Order should've been. He's a good man who tragically didn't live to do what he needed to do. He's the root source of redemption for Obi-Wan, Yoda, eventually even Anakin.

0:47

Plinkett: "If they did have to have Qui-Gon, they should've had him on the ship, just like meditating the whole movie, saying very little, and just being wise. Then when Qui-Gon dies, Obi-Wan is left to move on without an older, wiser voice of reason. Thus setting the stage for a poorly-trained Anakin."

Wow. Stoklasa suggests an alternate plot, which basically does the same things as the **actual** plot of the movie (Qui-Gon is killed off, leaving Anakin in Obi-Wan's flawed hands), but with all of the nuance and meaning stripped away from the story. Instead of a metaphor for actual father-son relationships, or themes about becoming more open-minded and freeing yourself to achieve your potential...we have Obi-Wan just plain sucking and Anakin being a crappy Jedi. What's even supposed to build up Anakin's resentment of Obi-Wan and eventual betrayal in RLM's suggested story? According to his alternative, Obi-Wan is the one sticking up for Anakin!

An improved Episode I would've kept Qui-Gon as the kindly and prematurely killed father figure, while also giving Obi-Wan a larger role with more scenes. Not this crap where Qui-Gon is uninvolved, and Obi-Wan and Anakin are just stupid (written by some fanboy who suggests Rambo fighting tactics, finds some way to bitch about shields being knocked out in a scifi movie with spaceships, and has trouble telling the difference between a "readout" and a picture).

1:13

Plinkett: "So for no reason, Obi-Wan is the one who does not want to defy the Council."

Yeah, because setting the character up as a conservative, by-the-book guy who believes in authority, and is therefore distrustful of Anakin later on is "**no reason.**" But these are the words of someone who seems completely clueless and unaware of the main themes of the *Star Wars* saga.

1:24

Plinkett: "Then the older wiser Jedi's the opposite of what he should be. Let's break down Qui-Gon. All the way to his Midichlorians."

Oh boy, more analysis of the character from the guy who can't even describe him outside of an incorrect usage of the word "**stern.**"

1:32

Plinkett: "Number one. He has very questionable moral values. Qui-Gon Jinn repeatedly uses his Jedi Mind Trick to his advantage. Whether it's to get Boss Nass to give him a Bongo...which they completely trash, to use worthless money to scam Watto out of his ship parts...

Qui-Gon: "Credits will do fine." [attempts Jedi Mind Trick]

or to fix a legitimate bet to his advantage. It's generally wrong to do these things, wouldn't you say?"

Good God. After displaying his gross ignorance of such subjects as military tactics and politics, Stoklasa now moves on to discussing ethics. Yeah, Qui-Gon uses his Jedi Mind Trick to fool people. Given the context in the movie, so what?

That Bongo submarine was needed to save the Naboo. Oh yeah, I forgot, based on his inept reading of that scene, Stoklasa apparently didn't think the Jedi had reason to believe that the Trade Federation was invading, despite surviving attempts on their lives and **seeing** the invasion army itself!

Procuring the needed ship parts was another just cause. Watto didn't want Republic credits because that currency apparently isn't used on Tatooine. But even money that's hard to convert into usable form could potentially be converted. Excuse Qui-Gon for trying to pay in *some* form.

And Qui-Gon used his telekinesis on a rolling die to fix his bet with Watto in order to free a slave. Wow, what a horrible thing to do...If you're some ignoramus with no understanding of anything that he's talking about.

2:01

Plinkett: "You can argue that the ends justify the means, but if that's the case then why didn't Qui-Gon just steal the part from Watto? He can sneak in, in the middle of the night and just take the part."

It's really funny that Stoklasa thinks it's just a singular "**part**" that's needed, and that Qui-Gon can just pick it up and walk off with it. In the movie, they clearly use the plural "**parts**." Imagine someone owning a private airplane, which suffers serious damage to major systems such as the engine. Would you think that this person could just walk into a store and shoplift the part he needed?

2:11

Plinkett: "Or, take it by force. And I don't mean that kind of Force, I mean choke Watto while Padmé grabs the part and they run out of the shop. Basically, it's the same as trying to trick him into accepting a worthless currency for the part. In the end Watto's just out of the part."

No, it's not nearly the same. Stoklasa actually suggests that Qui-Gon that Qui-Gon violently choke someone out. Who the hell does he think Qui-Gon is?



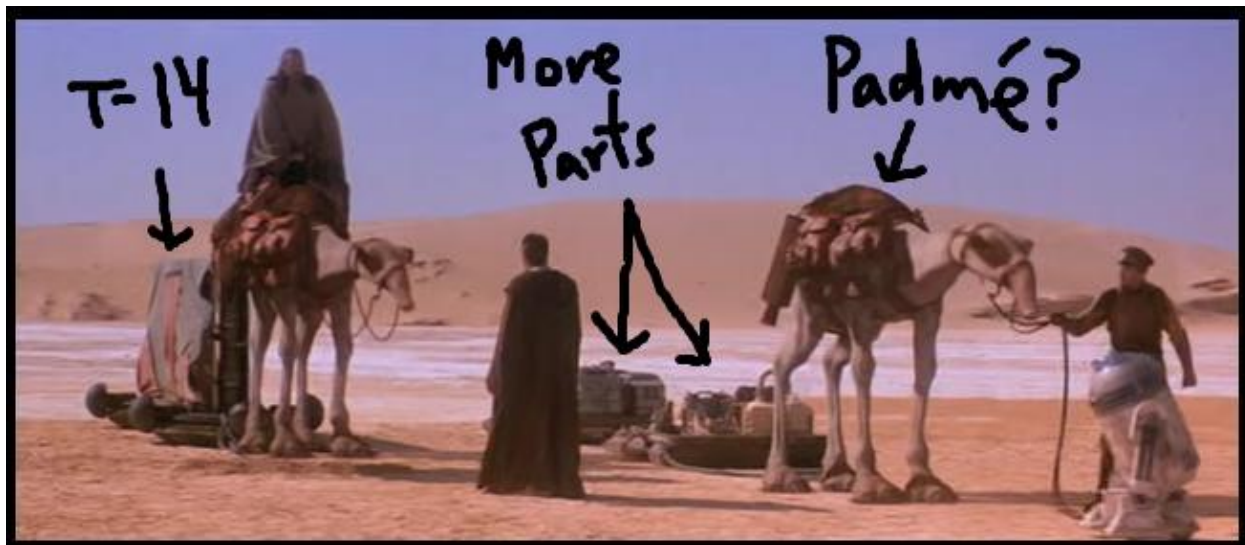


...I shouldn't even have to explain how stupid and out of character that is. And no, assaulting or murdering someone isn't the same as trying to buy something with him using currency that's hard to exchange. Stoklasa sees fit to comment on Qui-Gon's ethics, when he himself seems to think in unbelievably simplistic, black-and-white terms.

He also apparently believes that Padmé is capable of just picking up the "**part**", and running off with it. But we had already been shown one of the parts earlier in the movie:



Doesn't exactly fit in the palm of your hand, does it? But I guess it's reasonable to assume that Padmé, a small teenage girl, can just grab this thing (along with a bunch of other stuff) and run off with it all. I mean, we see her doing exactly that later in the movie, when they return to the ship with all the parts they need:



And what happens after they grab the parts? If they had done things as Stoklasa suggested, then Qui-Gon would have physically assaulted someone. If they don't murder Watto in cold blood (which is completely out of character), then Watto would be screaming for help. So much for avoiding attention. And who is going to respond? Based on lines before and after this scene, Hutt crime cartels are the ones enforcing the "law" on Tatooine. And our "heroes" (if you can still call them that after brutally

attacking a shopkeeper) would have to escape while hauling what could be hundreds of pounds in parts through the desert. Yeah, this is so much better than trying to subtly trick Watto into accepting Republic money.

2:26

Plinkett: "This also leads me to believe that Qui-Gon Jinn is incredibly stupid. He could've just went to another junk dealer and used his Jedi Mind Trick to swap out the Republic credits for money that Watto would take."

The Jedi Mind Trick is not a guaranteed to work every time. The first time it's used, on Stormtroopers in ANH, Old Obi-Wan explicitly states that it worked because the Stormtroopers were **"weak minded."** It didn't work on Jabba, and it didn't work on Watto just now.

Furthermore, the price that Watto set for the needed parts was huge. So expensive that he stated

Watto: "You might as well buy a new ship. It would be cheaper, I think."

That makes sense since the Royal Starship is probably a high-performance ship compared to more common civilian vehicles. Anyway, the Jedi Mind Trick is a "trick" after all, and not complete mind control. It is a suggestion that the Jedi briefly gets someone to believe. If Republic credits are in fact completely useless on Tatooine (as Shmi later explains at her dinner table, **"The Republic doesn't exist out here"**), then asking another dealer to swap out huge amounts of Tatooine money for Republic credits might be so ludicrous that Qui-Gon could never hope to trick someone into believing it. It's one thing to get a Stormtrooper to think that a couple ordinary-looking droids are of no interest, or to get the Gungan leader to make one small gesture of generosity. It's quite another to tell a shop dealer to give away a large sum of his own money for no benefit. And even if the trick did work, how long would it last? I seriously doubt the Jedi Mind Trick is permanent.

It helps if the trick's suggestion could be reasonably believed after the Jedi's manipulation has worn off, or easily glossed over even if the trick fails. But if Qui-Gon had done what Stoklasa suggested, then in short time whatever dealer he blatantly ripped off would realize what had happened.

Plinkett: "In fact when they arrive in town he says

Qui-Gon: "We'll try one of the smaller dealers."

Plinkett: "Smaller dealers. Well that implies there's larger ones."

Yeah, larger dealers that Qui-Gon clearly wanted to avoid. Seriously, Stoklasa's not even processing the very words that he's quoting. Qui-Gon says that line upon walking into Mos Eisley and turning his head around for a few seconds. It's obvious that he didn't do a full analysis on all the dealers in the city. He was just suggesting a course of action, and picked the first smallish-looking dealer that he saw. Yet Stoklasa is taking that casual statement literally. He has no real information on what other dealers there are in the city.

So, for Stoklasa's plan to make sense:

1. There would have to be bigger dealers in the area, who have large sums of money on hand.
2. These dealers would not only have to be weak-minded enough to be Mind Tricked, but be fooled into accepting a completely ridiculous suggestion that they swap their Tatooine money for "worthless" Republic money.
3. The Mind Trick has to last long enough for these people not to realize it later and retaliate or call for help, while Qui-Gon hauls numerous large parts through the desert.

And you know what? Even if all these conditions were valid, it's not like Qui-Gon didn't try anything else. After leaving Watto's shop, the movie cuts to sometime later. We see Qui-Gon talking with Obi-Wan about possibly bartering the ship's supplies or the Queen's wardrobe for the needed part. When they decide that that wouldn't work, Qui-Gon and his companions continue through the city and meet Anakin again. It's only a short time later that a sandstorm forces them to into Anakin's house. And by then, Qui-Gon has detected something special from Anakin and was therefore interested in also securing the boy's freedom. Which is why he sticks around and tries to work Watto some more.

2:45

Plinkett: "Watto tells him he's the only guy in town who's got the part."

Watto: "And no one else has a T-14 hyperdrive, I promise you that."

Plinkett: "Now either Watto is using an older than dirt sales tactic, or Qui-Gon can really pick out which shop to go to randomly. Oh wait. I guess Midichlorians told him where to go so that he could find the boy. Oh it was destiny or something."

Destiny, or not wasting time? What's even the point of saying this? Does Stoklasa think that the movie would be better served with time-wasting scenes of Qui-Gon going to other dealers, none of whom have the needed parts?

3:08

Plinkett: "Hey here's another idea! Why don't you trade the Naboo cruiser for a less fancy but functional ship?"

That involves finding a ship dealer sometime between leaving Watto's shop and being forced into Anakin's house by a sandstorm. A ship dealer with a working and trustworthy ship, one that he's willing to trade in for a damaged and nonfunctioning one. This suggestion also requires that Qui-Gon tell yet another person about his ship, which while damaged is still a luxury brand. As well as telling the ship dealer where he can pick up the Royal Starship, at which point he would have to hide the Queen and her people. No, not suspicious at all...remember that whole thing about not drawing attention?

3:15

Plinkett: "Or maybe hire a transport."

A short clip is shown, of Old Obi-Wan hiring Han in ANH.

Plinkett: "Pay them all the money you have now and then promise more when you get to Coruscant."

Yes, pay with Republic money that's considered no good at all on an Outer Rim world like Tatooine.

Plinkett: "Sound familiar? Someone who's like, uh, a transport ship captain or a smuggler would have use for Republic credits, because they travel around the galaxy. Probably go to other spaceports. You know, makes sense."

Spaceport or not, they had already established that Republic credits were useless on that world. If the various economies were so open and intertwined at that point in time, then you'd expect that Republic credits would be more useful through something called currency exchanges. Tatooine's situation in TPM is very different from its situation in ANH, where it appeared to have been annexed by the Empire.

And oh yeah, it makes total sense to put the Queen in a shady criminal's hands, and ask that he take all of her handmaidens and bodyguards as well. Not quite the same thing as one old man and a farm boy.

3:35

Plinkett: "But instead of using the most common sense approach to anything, Qui-Gon concocts some convoluted scheme so that we could get to the pod race. I honestly still don't understand it."

This is it folks. The dumbest and most idiotic part so far in an already idiotic review. If Stoklasa is for real here, then he's a complete imbecile.

He spends almost the next two minutes trying to say that Qui-Gon's deal with Watto makes no sense, and he does it in the most idiotic and obnoxious way that he can. He starts by playing some "funny" sounding music...because anything is automatically stupid if you play goofy music over it, right? Stoklasa proceeds to make a whole lot of jumpy video cuts through the scene where Qui-Gon negotiated Anakin's participation in the race, leaving out bits here and there no doubt in an attempt to make things seem more hazy than they really are. He then starts uttering a whole stream of stupid things, which don't even qualify as complete sentences since he deliberately cuts his thoughts short and skips around without making any points. Oh yeah, he also edits the sound so that his stupid sentence fragments ***simultaneously play over each other***. Despite how thorough I've been in quoting him so far, I'm not going to even attempt to type out the incoherent nonsense that he spews here. It's way too jumpy and stupid to quote, but watch the video for yourself to witness the stupidity.

Qui-Gon's dealing isn't all that complicated. In fact it's all clearly stated onscreen, and I understood it perfectly fine the first time I watched this movie in the theater. The most ironic thing is that even in Stoklasa's biased recounting of the negotiations, you can clearly tell what was being negotiated (before Stoklasa goes over the top with his clipped and overlapping sentence fragments).

This guy is an idiot for claiming not to understand a plot written so simply that children can get it. He wastes two minutes not making a single valid point. He's basically all style and no substance, except that I wouldn't even give him "style" here because his intentionally skewed quick cutting and stupid music are so obnoxious. It all looks and sounds like garbage.

If you actually sat through this segment of RLM's review and came away thinking that his review was "perfect," "insightful," or "well edited" (all things I've seen people saying on the internet), then shame on you for praising this dishonest audiovisual trash.

5:29

Stoklasa begins a new section, entitled "**10. Anakin Skywalker.**" Despite the title, he quickly veers away from the subject of Anakin.

Plinkett: "No one likes little kids, especially ones that can't act."

A fair subjective point. However, I understand why Lucas started with Anakin so young. It sets the character up in his later years, by showing the idealistic dreams and ambitions that are at his core. It better contrasts with his adulthood as Darth Vader, when he acted on his dreams but ironically compromised everything he once stood for. The whole thing about how Anakin can't let go of his mother wouldn't work as well if he were older. But I don't have a problem admitting that some scenes with the character were mishandled, or that Jake Lloyd's acting had its issues.

5:46

Plinkett: "The way they have it is that Anakin and his mom live in a comfy little hut, and if they leave there's a bomb in their brain."

Shmi: "Any attempt to escape..."

Anakin: "and they blow you up."

Plinkett: "I think that's the worst plot device ever shoved into a movie for convenience."

Why? This is pure unsupported opinion. Stoklasa criticizes something but doesn't provide any reasons to actually make his opinion convincing.

The explosive tracking devices serve the plot, and they make sense. If people are willing to put shock collars on pet dogs in real life, then why wouldn't a slave owner put explosive implants in his slaves?

6:00

Plinkett: "What purpose did Shmi Skywalker serve to Watto? She cleans her own dishes?"

I don't know, and I don't care. We saw her at night after her duties were presumably done for the day. During a sandstorm that had forced everyone indoors, no less. Does it matter one bit if the movie didn't elaborate on Shmi's daily chores?

6:06

Plinkett: "Oh and then let's move on to this. What about the idea that Anakin is the one who built C-3PO?"

I myself thought that C-3PO's cameo in TPM was unnecessary. It was a minor additional bridge between the original and prequel trilogies, that felt odd because of the idea of Vader and C-3PO knowing each other back in the day. But it was such a small thing, and I didn't really care one way or another.

Stoklasa's criticisms of C-3PO's cameo are much dumber though. He doesn't just stick with a safe and subjective position like "It seemed weird and unnecessary." Instead, he provides more stupid nitpicks which aren't even justified.

6:17

Plinkett: "This is wrong for so many reasons. I'm gonna list three of them. So the idea is that Anakin built C-3PO to help his mom around the house.

Anakin: "He's a protocol droid to help mom."

Plinkett: "But a protocol droid is typically used for etiquette and protocol...they're basically like robot diplomats, not very handy technically...Says he's human-cyborg relations. He doesn't say he cleans dishes! C-3PO is clumsy, awkward, and useless. Unless you need someone to translate a language."

Anakin stated the basic type of droid that C-3PO was, and that the droid was simply intended to help his mom. Wow, contradiction! Give me a break. It's a sweet little gift from a child to his mother. Have this guy ever seen some of the gifts that little kids make for their moms in real life? I seriously doubt that Anakin cared if C-3PO didn't have high-end physical performance. In ANH we see that C-3PO can lift things like dead Jawas. What's funny is that even in this part of Stoklasa's review, he shows a clip of a Trade Federation protocol droid serving drinks. Just the sort of thing that a house assistant would be doing.

7:06

Plinkett makes a few disgusting sexual comments about Shmi. He concludes them with

Plinkett: "Ah, rape jokes. I love 'em!"

Ooh, he said "rape." Edgy. Clever.

7:16

Plinkett: "Also, if you're a little boy with a knack for building things with spare parts, then why would you build the exact same droid that seems to have been mass produced by a manufacturing plant somewhere. Wouldn't you build some kind of unique robot from your imagination?"

He says it right there: Anakin is assembling preexisting parts to build C-3PO. I mean wow, Anakin had the sense to use parts from the same droid model, which would actually fit with each other? And all this complaining when Anakin wasn't even *done* with C-3PO yet? What's the point here, exactly?

7:31

Plinkett: "And to add to that, Watto already owned a protocol droid.

A clip is with a broken protocol droid inside Watto's shop is shown.

Plinkett: It's laying there in the garbage dump. Why not just fix that one?"

Yeah, Anakin should steal property slave master's shop for his own personal use at home. Does this guy even understand what being a slave is supposed to mean?

7:41

Plinkett: "So Qui-Gon manages to pull off the most convoluted bet ever, and somehow wins everything except for Anakin's mother. Even at the end of the movie when they save the day and probably could get the cash to buy the mom from Watto, they don't go back for ten years."

Maybe Qui-Gon didn't go back because he was dead at the end of the movie. As for the rest of the Jedi, they not only never knew Shmi but they also saw Anakin's attachment issues as dangerous. As Yoda explains, emotion and personal attachment are paths to the Dark Side. While those things are true if taken to the extreme, the point of the prequel trilogy is that the Jedi Order has grown cold, personally detached, and unyielding in its devotion to its doctrines. Oh yeah, I forgot that Stoklasa apparently missed those things, along with how Qui-Gon's compassion was contrasted against the other Jedi.

The Jedi Council was already reluctant to train Anakin since he was starting off in such an unorthodox way, coming to them as a nine year old instead of being trained and conditioned from infancy. They weren't going to contradict procedure even more by indulging Anakin's parental attachment.

And here, Stoklasa once again displays his ignorance of another subject. The Jedi are a Republic government agency, charged with protecting the Republic. Does he think that the Jedi should have used Republic time and money to buy Shmi's freedom? Or pay for Shmi's life afterward, since it wouldn't do much good to buy a penniless slave (who was living in relative comfort anyway) just to abandon her with no job or resources? That's misappropriation of assets, at the very least. There's also the fact that ***Shmi is not a Republic citizen, and Tatooine is not Republic territory.***

In real life, there are US federal workers and military members who have lots of personal and financial problems. They don't all get free handouts. Also in real life, if you pay for a slave then you can be prosecuted. That's because you're financing human trafficking, by giving a slaver money to buy another slave.

But couldn't the Jedi forcefully free Shmi? Well, as I pointed out before, they wouldn't even want to indulge Anakin. And again, Tatooine is not Republic territory. Slavery is legal on Tatooine, and Shmi is Watto's legal property. The Jedi aren't required to go out of their way and mess with that, possibly causing more trouble for the Republic. If they freed one slave, will they be freeing more? That runs the risk of antagonizing the Hutt crime cartels that control the planet.

The Jedi's mission is to protect the Republic's interests, not to go around messing with people outside of it. It's ignorant and simplistic for Stoklasa to not see the many reasons why they wouldn't go after Shmi. Especially when Anakin's attachment to his mother was something that they openly criticized.

7:55

Another section, "**10. On to Planet Number 3. Is it Time For Death Yet?**" begins.

"Planet Number 3" here is Coruscant. Stoklasa basically skipped over the pod race itself despite the fact that it is considered a major feature in this movie, both by design and by many people's reactions to it. He also skipped over the parts where Anakin tearfully said goodbye to his mother, even though things like that were big parts of this movie's emotional core, as well as important to the rest of the prequel trilogy. I can only guess that he skipped over these things because he's ignorant of the themes that the movie is actually trying to convey (which is definitely not that Qui-Gon is pointless and

"stern"). Or he could be skipping over things because he's not writing a fair review, but is instead just trying to look for little things to nitpick.

Stoklasa also glosses over Coruscant very quickly, skipping over more important scenes. The Senate scenes showed that Naboo's problem had a much wider scope than it seemed to at first. It shows the Republic's decay and corruption, and sets up Palpatine's rise to power. But you don't get any hint of that significance here, in Stoklasa's rush job summary of a full sixteen minutes of Coruscant scenes. **He rushes through about forty minutes altogether if you add that to the time on Tatooine during and after the pod race.** Stoklasa can spend some 40 minutes nitpicking the first 29 minutes of TPM, or 2 minutes *pretending* on more than one occasion to be baffled by such simple things as starship shields or Qui-Gon's negotiating. But he won't analyze parts that are actually important to the movie. Stoklasa just breezes over the most basic and superficial details, occasionally throwing in an insult like "**boring**" without bothering to explain why. He sums up most of the entire second act of the movie in about a minute.

The heart of TPM is not the trade dispute, or Qui-Gon drinking tea, or Stoklasa being too stupid to understand the idea of seeking help from a nearby city instead of walking through miles of wilderness on your own. TPM is about a kindhearted man who tries to do good and help others that he meets along the way, fighting against the stifling control of his bosses. It's a story about the decay of a once mighty Republic. About a mother letting go of her son so that he can move on to greater things, and two children who rise above their challenges.

It seems very suspect to me that Stoklasa doesn't say much, if anything about these things. He's not even particularly negative about them; rather he just omits mentioning these important parts in any meaningful way. As if it wasn't obvious before, it's clear that he either doesn't understand this movie or isn't honestly reviewing it.

8:39

Plinkett: "Obi-Wan and Qui-Gon both talk about how Anakin is 'dangerous' when he's standing right there."

Apparently Stoklasa has never witnessed the real life phenomenon of adults talking about children when they're in the same room. Or he's grasping at straws again for something to complain about.

8:50

Plinkett: "Then George Lucas completely and utterly finally ruins *Star Wars* forever. By having Qui-Gon explain that the Force is microscopic organisms.

Qui-Gon: "Midichlorians are a microscopic life form that resides within all living cells."

I didn't like Midichlorians either, and I thought that they were a mistake. Their existence detracted from the mystique of the Force, and "felt" wrong. However, a lot of fans blew the Midichlorians way out of proportion. As Qui-Gon stated, Midichlorians help people communicate with the Force. They are not the Force itself, which ANH already explained as a field of life energy binding every living thing together. The impression that I got when watching TPM for the first time was that since the Midichlorians are such primordial and basic organisms, they are more closely linked to the universe's basic life energy. They congregate in places and people where the Force is very strong.

9:05

Plinkett: "Or that microscopic organisms in our cells tell us about the Force. Or something."

If he's going to acknowledge that fact, then why not state it right away? Instead of after reciting that stupid and exaggerated misinterpretation that the Midichlorians ARE the Force?

But it doesn't matter if a criticism is incorrect, or even if he himself acknowledges that it's wrong just a few seconds later. Just bringing up another criticism creates more negative sentiment in viewers who aren't smart enough to think for themselves. It still sticks in their heads even after he admits that it's wrong (a few seconds later), because the average viewer is too stupid to adjust his thinking beyond initial impressions. Going over the YouTube comments for Part 5 of this review, I see quite a few people incorrectly equating the Midichlorians to the Force. ***Even though RLM himself quickly backed off from the claim.***

Getting back to the review, RLM gives a middle finger to George Lucas (complete with picture) and rushes all the way to the heroes returning to Naboo.

Part 6

0:00

Another section, "**11. Please God Make it Stop Make it End**" begins.

Plinkett: "Qui-Gon and Obi-Wan go back for no reason"

Uh, they it was explicitly stated that they were going back to help the Queen, and discover more about the mysterious Sith plot.

Plinkett: "and they bring the little kid to a war zone for no reason."

This is a fair criticism. The movie never really justified why Anakin was going with them, despite how dangerous it was for him.

My only guess is that it was because Anakin's status in the Republic was questionable at best, and the Jedi Order had already rejected him. Qui-Gon may have wanted to keep Anakin close to the boy's few friends just in case he died, so that the Jedi wouldn't just send Anakin away somewhere.

But Qui-Gon's actions here are questionable, and the movie should have done some more to show why Anakin was even with them. Perhaps there could have been a scene where Anakin snuck onboard the Queen's ship as it took off back to Naboo.

0:13

Plinkett: "But really what's curious about this is that no other Jedi come back with them. Even though there might be a Sith there."

Some clips of the numerous Jedi who went to Geonosis in AOTC are shown.

Plinkett: "There's much more important work for the other five hundred Jedis here. Eh, all the Jedis will just sit here and see who gets elected Chancellor, I guess."

Using an AOTC clip to criticize a TPM scene isn't fair, because TPM came out years before AOTC. Never mind the huge differences in the missions. In AOTC, they sent hundreds of Jedi to potentially fight a Separatist army, with the full backing of the Republic government. In TPM, they sent two Jedi to handle a small planetary matter

that was considered controversial by the corrupt Senate. Also, Qui-Gon and Obi-Wan were hoping to bait Darth Maul into showing himself. It's a lot harder to bait someone when you have an entire army of Jedi with you.

0:58

Plinkett: "So everyone waits until they arrive at Naboo to start discussing how they have no plans at all, and no idea what they're doing."

Once again Stoklasa makes a criticism based on a poor reading of the actual movie. The scene in question starts in the Royal starship's cockpit, where the pilot is having fun with Anakin and showing the boy how the ship's controls work. There is nothing but the blackness of space and distant stars around them. We then cut to the rest of the heroes in another part of the ship, talking with the Queen about their plans.

The movie then uses a one of Lucas's favorite techniques, a wipe transition, to show the ship approaching Naboo. Obi-Wan and Captain Panaka are now in the cockpit with the pilot, while Anakin is nowhere to be seen. The pilot says that he can see a Droid Control Ship on the sensors. Time has obviously passed, as hinted by the wipe transition, the different characters in the cockpit, and the fact that the pilot can see enemies on his sensors (in contrast to chilling out with Anakin like he had before).

So no, the movie does not show the characters stupidly waiting until they arrived at Naboo before discussing any plans.

1:10

Plinkett: "All of a sudden the whole blockade is gone too, and there's just one ship. Where'd they go? That's convenient."

Yeah, it is convenient. It's hardly unheard of for heroes in action movies to occasionally receive some favorable breaks, when they would otherwise be up against hopeless odds. This break also makes sense anyway. Maintaining a blockade ties up massive amounts of resources. All the blockading ships could actually be used for shipping, or for maintaining security in other areas. The blockade is also unnecessary, if the planet being blockaded has been conquered and occupied by ground troops.

1:25

Plinkett: "So then they make a plan. The Gungans act as robot bait so that the Queen can sneak into the palace and capture the Viceroy while the fighters attack the Droid Control Ship. So what happens again when they capture the Viceroy?"

Padmé: "Without the Viceroy they will be lost and confused."

Brace yourselves. Here comes more stupid extended whining from Stoklasa, yet again trying to create problems that don't actually exist.

Stoklasa switches character to some Star Trek guy, which I assume to be a reference to one of his previous movie reviews.

Star Trek Officer: "Um, excuse me. Hi, how do you know for sure that the robots will be lost and confused without the Viceroy? I mean just by physically capturing him doesn't mean that all the robots will know that he was captured, right? It, it just seems that you're making up a bunch of BS right now. Hey maybe they're programmed to just keep doing what they're doing regardless, until they receive more orders? Hey maybe everyone should focus their efforts on taking out the Droid Control Ship first?"

At least here, Stoklasa takes on a character who tries to sound like the calm voice of reason, instead of an annoyingly incoherent psycho. It's less unpleasant to listen to at least, compared to all that had come before. But again, the answers to his problems are right there in front of him:





I'm here to provide
a running commentary
on everything you
SHOULD be doing!

How do you know the robots
will be lost and confused without
the Viceroy? What if they just keep
doing what they're doing? How will
they know he's been captured?

Look, I really
don't have
time for this...



We'll TELL them,
genius! God, you act like
it's weird to try to capture
the enemy leader...

Shouldn't you focus your
efforts on taking out the
Droid Control Ship first?

What the HELL do
you think we're trying
to do RIGHT now?



The plan was to capture the Viceroy while also attempting to destroy the Control Ship. In fact, the ground attack on the palace directly enabled the fighter attack on the ship! It's a multi-pronged attack that allows for successful gains even if one part should fail. Taking out the enemy's leadership will obviously undermine their army's coordination. At the very least, that enemy leader won't be able to issue any more orders.

On the issue of the battledroids continuing their current actions until receiving new orders, that's what communication is for. Obviously Padmé could announce the Viceroy's capture and use him as a hostage to make demands. And it's not like the Trade Federation wouldn't have already communicated the capture themselves, since Padmé and her troops had been violently storming the palace.

The idea that the characters should just **"focus their efforts on taking out the Droid Control Ship first"** is amusing in its simple-mindedness. How does he propose they "focus" on it any more than they do in the actual movie? Does he have any actual plan of his own, rather than a bunch of stupid questions?

The Naboo forces had a limited number of trained pilots, and no fighter ships as of the beginning of the attack. How else were they supposed to take on the Control Ship?

Stoklasa continues the stupid comments, in the guise of a Star Trek character.

Star Trek Officer: "Then you could skip the other two dangerous parts. And you could just walk up to the Viceroy and capture him. Who's in charge here? What's this all about again? Why are we all listening to fourteen year old girl with no military experience?"

What the hell does he mean by **"walk up to the Viceroy and capture him?"** I'm pretty damn sure that the Viceroy wouldn't let them just approach him like that, without heavy battledroid protection. Yet another stunningly bizarre statement, beneath even the simplistic thought processes of children.

The irony is also great. Stoklasa criticizes Padmé for having **"no military experience."** Judging from the laughable tactics that he has suggested throughout his review, I'm going to go out on a limb and guess that he has no military experience either. After all, he's tactical genius who actually thinks that THIS is a good idea:



After this part, Stoklasa gets rid of the Star Trek character and goes back to his creepy "Plinkett" persona.

2:25

Qui-Gon: "There is a possibility that with this diversion, many Gungans will be killed."

Plinkett: "Hey wait Gungans? I thought they were called Gungas?"

A real life clip of George Lucas going over his story ideas is shown. In the clip, Lucas says "Gungas" with no "n" at the end.

Ooh, Lucas made a minor adjustment to the name of his fictional aliens, then remained consistent with "Gungans" throughout the actual movie. Big whoop.

2:42

Viceroy: "We are sending all troops to meet [the Gungan army] assembling near the swamp."

Plinkett: "Why would you meet them? Why not just ignore them? You have a fortified position. Can't you see an obvious ploy to draw away your protection?"

More ignorance from Stoklasa. He has only the vaguest idea of the strategic situation based off of one line (that there's a Gungan army out there somewhere), yet he makes accusations of stupidity.

The Trade Federation army has tanks and superior firepower. Technologically superior armies typically prefer to face their enemies in open, direct combat. If you have superior weapons, then it is sensible to use those superior weapons on the enemy army and crush it right away. It's not a difficult concept

God, can you imagine how a guy like Stoklasa would run an actual war?



As for the city, Stoklasa claims that it's "**fortified**" with no evidence whatsoever. Sitting inside the city, fortified or not, would allow the Gungans to encircle them. It could prevent the Trade Fed from bringing all of its firepower to bear. And if the Gungans don't throw themselves directly at the city, then staying inside could allow them to run rampant around the countryside. We know for a fact that the Trade Federation is occupying more than just the city, because of the internment camps that were mentioned.

Basically Stoklasa doesn't have *any* idea about all the details that could be relevant to the strategic picture. So his criticism based off of one vague line has no actual merit.

As for the Viceroy's "protection," it's not like he sent *all* of his forces out to crush the Gungans. Nobody keeps an entire army tied down for their personal protection. For personal security, people usually rely on...security forces.



*Secret Service has locked down
the area. The police and the
FBI are involved...*



*Men are on the rooftops,
watching everything...*



I don't want no
"security." I want the
1st Infantry Division!
Ten thousand troops
on the streets, and
not one man less!



Stoklasa also asks more stupid questions while nitpicking another line from this scene:

Sidious: "This will work to our advantage."

Plinkett: "How exactly will it work to your advantage? The Galactic Senate doesn't even know what's happening here. What does it matter?"

Obviously, Sidious thought that it was advantageous with regards to the military situation on Naboo. The Gungan army came out in the open where it could be easily crushed.

3:05

Qui-Gon: "Once we get inside, you find a safe place to hide and stay there."

Plinkett: "Aw Christ, you brought the kid here too? Hey here's a safe place to hide: Not in the city!"

A fair criticism. I don't know why Qui-Gon brought Anakin there either. The movie should've either forced him to bring Anakin along out of necessity, or have Anakin sneaking in by himself after them.

3:44

Captain Panaka: "The difficulty's getting into the throne room. Once we're inside, we shouldn't have a problem."

Plinkett: "If the Viceroy was smart, he would be in a location you would not expect to find him. But since he's clearly a complete idiot, then yeah, he's probably in the throne room. Let's go with that."

Earlier (go back to 2:53 of Part 4), didn't Stoklasa criticize the Trade Federation for not keeping the Queen in the palace, which he seemed to think was the most secure place? Maybe, just maybe the throne room is the most secure part in the palace? It certainly would be more secure right now, after the Trade Federation's army has had some time to pacify the city. More so than it would be immediately following the invasion.

Anyway, it doesn't matter at all for the plot. The Naboo forces obviously did some recon on the Trade Fed's forces before their attack, going by the dialogue. The Viceroy could be anywhere, and it wouldn't change the story in any meaningful way.

Stoklasa goes on to the lightsaber duel between the Jedi and Darth Maul.

4:20

Plinkett: "Oh and then they go from the palace to this room [the place with the bottomless pits]. What is this room? Is this in the palace? I mean I know George wanted the Jedis to fight in a cool place that's really Star Warsy. So, so this is what a power generator? What does it power, the universe? So you're expecting me to believe that the people that built this technological wonder were dying without space supplies after two days?"

No, I don't expect people to believe that, since it was never stated in the movie and Stoklasa basically made it up. We already went over this stupid point earlier in the review. No Naboo had to be "dying" after "two days" of a blockade; the important fact is that they were being blockaded and that's generally not seen as a good thing.

4:44

Plinkett: "So I have another question. If the Sith have been extinct for a millennium, and only Jedis use lightsabers...then why are the Jedis so darn experienced at sword fighting?"

Uh, it's called training and sparring. Another stupid, pointless question. Stoklasa starts breezing through things again, asking a lot of questions like these. Some are OK nitpicks, others are just stupid.

4:57

RLM: "So at the start of the film we see that Jedis can run at a super fast speed when the screenwriter doesn't know how to get them out of a situation where a powerful droid [the Droidekas] is shooting lasers at them."

He labels the Jedi's super speed as a cop out by the writer, although it seems to me that it was more of a momentary "cool effect." If the writer wanted the Jedi to run away...then the Jedi would simply run away, super speed or not. The Droidekas were standing still while shooting; there was no implication at all that the Jedi couldn't otherwise outrun them.

5:06

RLM: "But we never see them run fast again."

Fair point, although you can say that about all the other Force powers. Why don't the Jedi and Sith use telekinesis or lightning at every moment during every fight? The

simple explanation is that the Jedi's powers aren't limitless, and you can't just pull out any Force power at any given moment.

A clip is shown, of Obi-Wan not being fast enough to rejoin Qui-Gon before an energy shield cuts him off.

But Stoklasa also doesn't mention the factors leading up to the specific part that he's complaining about here. Obi-Wan is kicked in the face by Darth Maul. He then falls several dozen feet down, slamming hard into another walkway below him which he barely grabs hold of in order to avoid falling even more. Obi-Wan then pulls himself up, before using the Force to leap high up again. So excuse him for not using the Force *again* several seconds after just using it, and not long after taking some hard hits.

Now, this part wasn't a big deal. But it's yet another tiresome example of Stoklasa making a nitpick without mentioning the easy explanation that already exists.

5:19

Sidious: "Wipe them out. All of them."

A clip of the droid army rounding up surrendering Gungan troops is shown.

Plinkett: "If the orders were to wipe them out, all of them, then why are they taking prisoners?"

True, the Trade Federation didn't completely wipe the Gungans out. But a few general words about wiping out the enemy does not mean that you can't take prisoners. Prisoners can be interrogated or put to use before being destroyed anyway. Who cares.

5:29

Padmé: "I will not condone a course of action that will lead us to war." [clip from the beginning, *before* the Trade Fed invasion]

A few brief clips from the battle at the end of the movie are shown.

Oh yeah, real clever there. He really took it to the movie by pointing out a huge inconsistency...oh wait he's just being stupid again and ignoring everything that happened between the beginning and the end.

5:40

Plinkett: "Yeah, you're such a peaceful people that you keep guns in the armrests of your throne. Yeah, peaceful *and* paranoid?"

So a leader having some personal security measures means your society can't be peaceful...I get that Stoklasa is trying to be sarcastic and funny, but he's still not making any clever observations here.

5:55

Another section, "**12. Obi-Wan Gets Mad and Then I Do**" begins. It goes deeper into the climatic lightsaber battle.

Plinkett: "Their flawless choreography lacks all humanity and emotion."

Now, this is obviously a subjective statement of opinion that can't be flat out refuted, unlike a factual assertion. All I would say to this is that if this lightsaber fight sucked for having too much choreography, then he must hate every martial arts movie out there. Because I'm not seeing how the choreography was too excessive compared to many other movies. Obviously there is choreography, but the action remains fast and in the moment. There is no slow-motion, nor are there extremely conspicuous camera movements or elaborately drawn-out acrobatics. I wouldn't say that TPM's lightsaber battle was particularly stylized compared to most contemporary action movies.

6:08

Plinkett: "But then something happens: Qui-Gon dies, and Obi-Wan is pissed. Hey, hey maybe this will finally get good. Maybe I'll get emotionally involved. You see Obi-Wan is pumped. He really wants to kick this guy's ass...and then BAM! Oh. That's right back to highly choreographed fighting.

In the movie, Obi-Wan charges and jumps at Darth Maul, swinging while still in the air. The two then slash at each other. Again, the level of choreography is a matter of opinion, though I've seen *far* more in many other movies. But then Stoklasa steps away from pure opinion, and decides to make a comparison to ROTJ:

6:32

Plinkett: "Hey remember when Luke Skywalker got really pissed and snapped when Vader was taunting him? Remember how worked up and emotional he got? He just started wailing on Vader. There was no grace, or complex choreography. He was just pounding him into submission. Filled with rage. When you're

worked up with emotion you begin to lose your composure and control. You expose your humanity a little. Obi-Wan should've done that, just a bit."

He doesn't mention that Vader and the Emperor had been pushing Luke's buttons for an extended period of time before that, trying to piss him off and tempt him into joining the Dark Side. The whole point of that scene wasn't that Luke was just experiencing some natural anger, but that he was ***on the verge of turning evil***. He was losing control of himself and on the verge of being forever corrupted.

Not only is Obi-Wan not Luke, but he wasn't set up as being tempted by the Dark Side either. He shouldn't have been filled with anywhere near such uncontrollable rage. And it's not like a well-trained warrior has to forget his skills and training if enraged in the middle of battle. I find it funny that Stoklasa seems to think equate "expose your humanity" means to lose control.

As a matter of opinion, someone wouldn't be wrong for saying that they would've liked Obi-Wan or the fight if there was more explicit emotion. But comparisons should still be appropriate.

Anyway, RLM spends the next couple of minutes analyzing the lightsaber duels in the original trilogy. He actually makes some good points about the meaning and themes behind those fights.

7:16

Plinkett: "There's a lot going on between the two characters [in TESB] outside the fact that they were swinging swords at each other. There is even a lot more going on at the end of *Jedi*. Luke was realizing that he was kinda becoming his father and taking his place. And the Emperor was proving a point that hate and anger can be a powerful ally. You got things like temptation, anger, revelation, defiance, sacrifice, and redemption. What's happening at the end of *Phantom Menace*? Three guys we don't care about are fighting each other over...something."

See, now THIS is more like it for a change. Stoklasa stays within the safe realm of opinion, and actually supports his opinion here with observations from the movies. He provides some meatier commentary about important things like the themes of the movies, instead of nitpicking every little thing to hell and getting most of it wrong along the way.

I think most people will agree that TPM didn't have as much emotion and meaning compared to the other *Star Wars* movies. This is a fair point by Stoklasa. Too bad it comes so late, after a ridiculous amount of dimwitted nitpicky garbage.

8:00

Plinkett: "So if you've ever said that the duel at the end of *A New Hope* was the worst one because it had bad fight choreography, and it was like a old guy, and a guy in a mask who couldn't see what he was doing, so they were just awkwardly hitting him with swords, then I'm afraid you missed the point entirely. It's really about moments like this."

A clip of Obi-Wan's sacrifice is shown.

OK, although I would point out that this fight wasn't exactly at the end of ANH (it occurred about three-fourths of the way through). And while I'm not one to bash the lightsaber fight in ANH, I would say that if you're trying to defend it then pointing out the sacrifice that comes isn't a very strong argument. Arguing like that suggests that the fight's merit comes not from the fight itself, but something that happened only happened after the actual fighting.

Remember this part though, it comes up shortly later in RLM's review.

8:45

Stoklasa goes outside of his stated scope of reviewing TPM, by spending time to criticize the final battle between Anakin and Obi-Wan at the end of Episode III.

Plinkett: "You might be thinking that the duel between Anakin and Obi-Wan had some kind of depth to it because they were former friends. [Some garbled words] this indeed had a little more going on than

A clip of the lightsaber fight in TPM is shown.

Plinkett: "nothing and"

A clip of the lightsaber fight in AOTC is shown.

Plinkett: "even more nothing. This duel [in ROTS] didn't need to be 45 minutes long."

Fact checking time. Approximately 12 minutes pass between the moment when Anakin and Obi-Wan take out their lightsabers and the moment when Obi-Wan hacks Anakin apart. These 12 minutes aren't even entirely devoted to their fight either, because they share that period of time with Yoda and Palpatine. We see Yoda and Palpatine talking to each other before having a big fight of their own. We see Yoda escaping the Senate chamber with the help of Senator Bail Organa as well.

So now a *few* minutes of fighting comes out to "45 minutes?" Even if he was just speaking casually, that number is so off that his statement is completely ridiculous.

And while you might not know this due to Stoklasa's biased statement, the final battles in ROTS in fact took less time than the final battles in other *Star Wars* movies. I quickly checked the other movies as well to see how long their climatic battles lasted. Now I admit that this part gets a little dicey, because the way that some of the battles started and finished weren't clear cut. For example, TESB's final battle nearly doubles in length if you include the *Millennium Falcon's* escape from Cloud City. AOTC has have several distinct battles not placed too far apart from each other. All of the below running times are approximate. I will state when I started and ended my counting each movie's "final battle" to make things more clear:

Episode IV: A New Hope

Began: The Rebel fighters dive toward the Death Star.

Ended: The Death Star explodes.

Length: 11 minutes

Episode V: The Empire Strikes Back

Began: Luke pursues Boba Fett and the Stormtroopers through the halls of Cloud City.

Ended: Vader cuts off Luke's hand.

Length: 12 minutes

Episode VI: Return of the Jedi

Began: Han's commando team breaks into the shield generator building.

Ended: The second Death Star explodes.

Length: 30 minutes

Episode I: The Phantom Menace

Began: The Trade Federation engages the Gungans.

Ended: Obi-Wan kills Darth Maul

Length: 18 minutes

Episode II: Attack of the Clones

Began: Mace Windu and the other Jedi reveal themselves at the arena.

Ended: Count Dooku escapes.

Length: 20 minutes

As you can see, ROTS's final battle was far shorter than the final battles in three of the other movies. It was about as long as the final battles at the end of the first two celebrated movies.

Once again, one of Stoklasa's claims is refuted with simple fact checking. Once again, he's been caught bashing a prequel movie while giving passes to the original trilogy movies for doing the same thing.

9:02

Plinkett: "The ultimate point of everything was that Obi-Wan defeats Anakin.

Having them fight in the most ridiculous of places only to wind up on a tiny hill at the end was overindulgent. This fight could've lasted 3 minutes in one location and still have the same impact in the story. The whole thing ends up going on so long that it actually becomes boring despite the amazing visual effects."

As I proved above, the final battles of ROTS were not long at all by the standards of the *Star Wars* series. And the ultimate point of everything is to ***entertain the audience***.

Now, granted everything he says in this paragraph is opinion. But his claim of the fight lasting "**45 minutes**" is ridiculously exaggerated. If his opinion is based on that wildly incorrect belief, then it's a stupid opinion. And *Star Wars* is an action adventure series. I'd venture to guess that most of the audience wanted a big epic duel to conclude the saga with, rather than a much smaller fight that lasts "**3 minutes in one location**."

Can you imagine that? Ending the movie series with the smallest scale and most unspectacular final battle of them all? A final battle that, at "**3 minutes**" long, would last a small fraction of the times that the other final battles went on for? The audience would walk out unsatisfied, feeling like the movie could've ended with so much more. I guess this is why George Lucas is a billionaire who makes successful blockbuster movies... and Mike Stoklasa is not.

9:25

Plinkett: "The ultimate irony is that this fight [Obi-Wan vs. Vader in ANH] between the same characters years later is much more interesting than this one [the duel in ROTS].

This is pure opinion that Stoklasa is entitled to. It's also an opinion that I think a lot of people out there would disagree with. The ROTS duel has a far bigger scope, better music (an epic score as opposed to a few brief dark notes at the beginning), and faster action. It is the culmination of everything in the prequel trilogy, instead of a short fight three-fourths of the way through ANH.

But what about the emotion? Stoklasa previously stated that emotion was such an important part of a fight, and criticized the lightsaber battle in TPM because Obi-Wan didn't get pissed off like Luke did in ROTJ. Well, the big fight in ROTS certainly showed a lot of emotion from both combatants. The fight in ANH, not so much. In ROTS both characters were living through a tumultuous time and grappling with the betrayal of the other (real or perceived). In ANH, not so much. Old Obi-Wan and Old Vader literally had decades to cool off since their previous conversation. They had accepted everything, and remained quite calm throughout the fight in ANH.

It's ultimately the guy's own decision as to which fight he likes better, and there's nothing to "prove" here either way. But a lot of people, including myself, have a different opinion. But Stoklasa isn't being fair and consistent in the way that he criticizes ROTS.

Part 7

0:00

The seventh and final part of this review of TPM begins with a section called **"13. The Ending Multiplication Effect."** Stoklasa states that the conclusion of each succeeding Star Wars film leading up to TPM has been made up of more and more sub-conflicts:

ANH:

1. Luke and some other pilots fly against the Death Star (in Stoklasa's stated opinion, **"The story is flawlessly built up to the final conclusion"**).

TESB:

1. Luke duels Vader.
2. Leia and the others fight Stormtroopers and escape from Cloud City.

ROTJ:

1. Luke duels Vader again.
2. The ground battle on Endor.
3. The space battle against the Imperial fleet and the second Death Star.

TPM:

1. Jar Jar and the Gungan army battle the Trade Federation's droids.
2. The Jedi fight Darth Maul.
3. Padmé and her team try to capture the Viceroy.
4. Anakin and the Naboo pilots try to destroy the Droid Control Ship.

This is true, the ending battles from ANH to TPM do get more dispersed and complex. However, Stoklasa doesn't really explain why this is a bad thing in and of itself:

1:02

Plinkett: **"This was one of the major mistakes made in Episode I. Ironically the simplest endings, to the first two movies, with the least locations and events, are vastly more interesting because the plot is built up to them and we can focus on the one thing."**

Now, I'm going to talk about the subject of multiple locations/events in the same battle. It's not necessarily the same thing as the *execution* of each separate event, and I had my problems as well with the execution of some parts of TPM's concluding battle.

Dispersed battles composed of more than one sub-conflict allow for each member of an ensemble cast to play a part. Notice how in ANH, which had the simplest and most focused conclusion, Luke is the only one who really gets to do anything. Han and Chewie take the *Millennium Falcon* and disappear, coming back only as a last second surprise to save Luke's butt. It's a triumphant surprise, but we never see the critical moments when Han grapples with his morality and decides to go back to fight.

R2-D2? He's reduced to a prop sticking out from the back of Luke's X-wing. Leia? She stands silently in the Rebel command center. She waits around with nothing to do, except to possibly die. Same thing with C-3PO.

So was ANH's conclusion really so "**flawlessly built up,**" as Stoklasa thinks? I don't think so. I've read before that screenwriters try to separate their battles so that each member of an ensemble can have something different to do. And that idea seems to be something that George Lucas followed himself, since "**The Ending Multiplication Effect**" started way back in the original trilogy. Just as he did when he glossed over the fact that Luke doesn't even show up in ANH until 17 minutes in, Stoklasa looked at the ending of original movie through rose-tinted glasses.

Now, why are multiple simultaneous battles even such a bad thing, in and of itself? Stoklasa doesn't really explain all that much. He claims that in movies with single ending battles, "**the plot is built up to them.**" But the plot in TPM built up to its fights as well. Stoklasa also said that it's easier "**to focus on the one thing.**" I'll give him that, although not having any sub-conflicts comes with its own problems, as I explained above.

And you know what seems odd to me? Stoklasa was so caught up thinking that he was smart and insightful for pointing out the multiple simultaneous fights, that he seemingly forgets to criticize the clearly dumb things that actually happened in the movie. Anakin improbably being taken into the space battle by his ship's auto-pilot? Very briefly skimmed over. Anakin's lack of fear and tension during the space battle? Not a word. Jar Jar's excessive bumbling? Not covered either. Rather strange, coming from the guy who spent 40 minutes covering the first 29 minutes of the movie, who liked to harp on such insignificant details as tea drinking or circular starships.

Brace yourselves again, because the next part just gets ugly:

1:15

Clips of George Lucas and his employees sitting down to view a rough cut of TPM (which I assume were taken from the DVD extras) are shown.

Plinkett: "After the rough cut screening of the movie for the first time, everyone in attendance looks just as baffled at the cluster**** as we were."

Stoklasa keeps showing clips from this DVD extra with Lucas and his employees stressing over how to edit the rough cut. He uses a few choice quotes to support his claims, but he also mutes some clips so that he can talk over them. Stoklasa claims that the footage shows that Lucas and his employees hated the movie themselves, and didn't know what they were doing. As you will see, Stoklasa twists and exaggerates things.

1:29

Plinkett: "The [movie's editor] then attempts to explain pacing, and why four scenes with totally different emotional tones don't work well together."

Editor: "In the space of about ninety seconds, you know you go from lamenting the death of, you know, a hero, to escape, to slightly comedic with Jar Jar, you know, to Anakin returning...[muted by Stoklasa]"

Plinkett: "But he kinda realizes he's wasting his time so he stops."

Actually, it looked like he kept talking but Stoklasa silenced him to give us his *own* version of what happened.

Look closely at what the editor is saying though. "**The death**" sounds like Qui-Gon's death scene after Maul is killed. "**Jar Jar**" is self-explanatory; the only thing it could be is Jar Jar's clumsy antics during the ground battle. I assume "**Anakin returning**" is Anakin happily celebrating as he escapes from the Droid Control Ship, after dealing a fatal blow from the inside.

Lucas and his employees were stressed out from the way that a few specific parts flowed into each other, within a short period of "**about ninety seconds**." They didn't hate the entire movie, or even the "**four scenes**" (battles) as Stoklasa is trying to make it look like. To be fair, *I did* think the tones in some of the battles didn't mesh well with the others. I thought Padmé and the Jedi's parts were great, while the light and comic tone in Anakin and Jar Jar's parts detracted from the tension. But Stoklasa is still overplaying his hand here.

1:51

Plinkett: "Rick McCallum is frozen in utter shock at how horrible the movie was. Internally, he regrets not challenging Lucas on some of the things he was worried about."

Nice of him to play mind-reader, and make up a bunch of things that Rick McCallum was supposedly thinking about.

2:33

Plinkett: "No one looks like they know what's going on, and they all look like they're about to start pointing fingers. But that's just my interpretation of this footage. I wasn't there."

The level of dishonesty here is disgusting. Once again, Stoklasa relies on the same trick. He keeps saying negative things that are unproven or even untrue, *then* admits that it's not the case or that he can't confirm it. Hammering negative feelings into people's heads, knowing that almost none of them will ever fact check his statements.

Go to the actual finished version of the movie. Qui-Gon has his sad and dramatic death scene. The movie then moves to the streets of Naboo, in a scene that's all business. Queen Amidala and Captain Panaka send the defeated Viceroy off, telling him that he's finished. Palpatine shows up and it's said that he won the election and is the new Chancellor. Yoda and Obi-Wan talk about training Anakin, in a serious scene where Yoda worries about "**grave danger**." The movie then switches to another grim scene, where we see Qui-Gon's funeral pyre. Yoda and Mace Windu worry about the other Sith who must still be out there. An eerie closeup tells everyone that that other Sith is Palpatine, in case they didn't realize that yet. It's not until after that, in the last scene showing the victory celebration, when the movie takes on a happy tone again.

"**Anakin's return**" and any scenes with Jar Jar? Nowhere to be seen here, but instead shifted into other parts of the movie.

So it looks like Lucas and his people figured out the editing problem that they were worrying about, and drastically reduced the clashing tones from the rough cut. Not that you realize that if you go by Stoklasa's portrayal of things.

2:43

Stoklasa skims over the ending of the movie within a few seconds, rambling and pointing out useless things. Nothing worth talking about.

2:54

Plinkett: "And then later on, or earlier or something, Yoda and Obi-Wan are talking in the castle, and and Yoda says"

Yoda: "Grave danger I fear in his training."

Obi-Wan: "I gave Qui-Gon my word." [that he would train Anakin]

Plinkett: "Oh. You gave Qui-Gon your word. I suppose it's better to rely on that than rather the whole prediction of 'grave danger.'"

[The words 'Grave Danger' are put onscreen for emphasis]

Plinkett: "So it seems like the Jedi Council reluctantly agrees to let Obi-Wan train the boy for no real reason."

No reason? Let's hear the logic behind that statement...

Plinkett: "Hey remember, this is not like some board room of company executives making a decision about apple sauce packaging. These are Jedi Masters, whose entire existence is based on 'The Force,' 'Feelings,' 'Premonition,' and 'Prophecy.'"

Plinkett: "When they ALL feel weirded out and predict 'grave danger,' you'd think they of all people would follow their own instincts. But instead for no reason AT ALL, they allow the training."

Yeah, no reason such as the boy probably being "**The Chosen One**" as predicted by prophecy? The kind of "prophecy" that RLM thinks the Jedi should adhere to? Never mind the fact that Qui-Gon believed in Anakin, or that the Jedi Council never even put their foot down before and said that Anakin would absolutely not be trained.

On Coruscant, the Jedi sensed fear in Anakin which isn't good but also isn't anything out of the ordinary coming from a young boy in a situation like that. When they informed Qui-Gon of their initial decision not to train Anakin, the only reason Mace Windu could bring up was a half-assed "**He is too old.**" Qui-Gon, another Jedi Master himself (who was explicitly said to be qualified for the Council, if only he would fall in line with the others), disputed that. Even Yoda admitted that Anakin's future was "**clouded**" and

difficult to see. The Jedi Council decided to defer their decision on Anakin's future until later, since they still had the Naboo crisis on their hands.

So the Jedi Masters, who admittedly *weren't even sure* before, eventually decided to trust Qui-Gon's judgment and grant his dying wish? Uh, okay. Not seeing a problem there.

3:55

Plinkett: "Yoda's supposed to be really wise, right?"

Yoda: "Fear leads to anger. Anger leads to hate. Hate leads to suffering."

Plinkett: "Wait, what did he just say? Maybe he isn't that wise, because that don't make a lick of sense. 'Fear leads to anger. Anger leads to hate. Hate leads to suffering.'"

These words from Yoda, which are very true, state another one of the *Star Wars saga's* main themes. That theme is how poisonous and insidious hatred can be, and how it can change who you are for the worse. It is what happens to Anakin, and what Luke resists in ROTJ. It's astounding that Stoklasa would take issue with these words. But he has already shown an ignorance for this movie, and this saga's themes. His explanation for why these words **"don't make a lick of sense"** is just idiotic:

RLM: "Can't anger lead to fear? And fear lead to suffering? And then suffering lead to hate? You see when you have three totally interchangeable emotional states, that can't really be arranged in a certain pattern of logic."

This guy must be a complete moron if he can't see the logical order of things. Let me plug in a few words to make things perfectly clear for the slow and stupid people out there who can't seem to get it:

"Fear [for your future] leads to anger [at people you think are holding you back]. Anger leads to hate [for those people]. Hate leads to suffering [because you fight with people or push them away]."

That's what happened to Anakin, though it could easily apply to anyone else. Here's another example:

"Fear [of foreigners taking your job, destroying your culture, or threatening your country] leads to anger. Anger leads to hate [for people who are different from you]. Hate leads to suffering [because it leads to discrimination or causes war]."

Now, was that so hard to understand? Give me a break. Of course Stoklasa revels in his idiocy and proposes his "funny" alternative of chicken leading to food leading to feces.

4:37

We're finally at the last part of this lousy review, titled **"14. The Aftermath."** Stoklasa doesn't really make any new points in these last five minutes. He does, however, suggest and insinuate a lot without any actual proof.

He starts by restating that TPM was the biggest disappointment ever. Who does he lay the blame on?

4:57

Plinkett: "Well, I guess you could say it was everyone involved in the production. Mainly the producers and those higher up on the food chain. Sure, it's easy to blame George for the script and doing everything wrong, but those people who didn't challenge Lucas on some of the questionable ideas, they also carry some blame."

If your opinion is that some of the people around Lucas should have spoken up or thought differently than him (for all you know they could have genuinely agreed with his ideas), then fine. Nothing wrong with that. But the way Stoklasa elaborates on this initial position gets worse and worse.

5:17

Plinkett: "To quote Gary Kurtz"

The following quote is displayed onscreen:

"I think one of the problems...is the fact that he (Lucas) doesn't have more people around him who really challenge him."

For those who don't already know, Kurtz was a producer who worked with Lucas on the first two Star Wars movies. He left after TESB following disputes with Lucas over the direction of the story. Instead of the happy ending to ROTJ that we got, Kurtz wanted a bittersweet one where Han Solo is killed in the middle of the third movie, Leia is left

carrying her new burdens as queen, and Luke walks off alone. Personally I think the movie that we did get sounds a lot better, but whatever. Since then, Kurtz has become a rallying point for disgruntled fans on the internet who dislike what Lucas has been doing with *Star Wars*.

Again, there's nothing wrong with the idea that someone can do better if he's receptive to advice from other people. But Stoklasa keeps digging himself deeper and deeper...

5:24

Plinkett: "You can really see this in the behind-the-scenes videos [a few clips are shown]. People look scared around George...they laugh at his bad jokes. When he comes into the room there's like silence, and fear, terror. Every so often you'll catch some looks of confusion and mistrust. You gotta wonder what some of these people were thinking."

Wow. Seriously wow. It's one thing to go off of documented disagreements like what Gary Kurtz has said about his split with Lucas. It's quite another to act like a paranoid conspiracy weirdo, claiming that you see "**terror**" and "**mistrust**" in people's eyes from some benign behind-the-scenes videos. Videos released by Lucasfilm itself. If Lucas's employees looked that freaked out, then why the hell would that video be released? Even in the clips that Stoklasa uses (and his editing has been pretty selective and biased throughout his entire review), I don't see the supposed "**fear**" that he's claiming. Because it's ridiculous:





...yeah, truly the faces of terror, and not just normal people standing there with normal looks on their faces.

And you know what? Stoklasa himself admits that he doesn't have anything to base these wild claims on:

5:50

Plinkett: "Now again I must stress: I wasn't there and I can't pretend to know all the goings-on behind the scenes."

That's right. He says that to cover his butt. But he doesn't fully retract what he just said either. He's happy to keep on speculating, making assumptions, and flinging mud on Lucas's image...

Plinkett: "But it all seems pretty obvious when you think about it. Lucas has always been a rogue filmmaker who hated the studio system. He always seemed to want total control on his projects, which I can understand. And while a director should have control on the project, filmmaking should also be a collaborative process."

Besides that unsupported statement about how "**obvious**" it is that things were horrible behind the scenes, this part isn't that bad. He brings up the writers, producers, and actors who have all contributed to Star Wars.

6:36

Plinkett: "I think all this can be summed up with the expression 'Art from adversity.' The original Star Wars was plagued with problems. Nothing worked right, things were rushed I guess, but it ended up being a great movie." [clips of some primitive droid props and costumes are shown]

If he's saying that physical *production problems* help the movie, then I don't know what to say.

Plinkett: "When you can make a movie entirely in a computer, and then shoot everything against a blue screen in some kind of a sterile laboratory,"

[clips of prequel actors in empty rooms, without CGI scenery, is shown]

Plinkett: "well, some of the magic is lost."

Man, working in animation must truly be a soulless occupation then, since none of *that* is physically real. Or how's about all those other CGI heavy blockbusters? Again, Stoklasa assumes things about how people felt during a production that he played no part in.

A clip of someone who worked on Episode II is shown:

LFL Employee: "When Obi-Wan is walking around in Kamino, George showed him concept paintings of okay, 'now you're walking down the hallway and you're seeing cloning facilities,' but there's nothing for him to see."

The employee is just pointing out that Ewan MacGregor was walking in an empty room, and had to be given artwork to show him what he was supposed to see. Big deal.

7:51

Plinkett: "Now I ain't gonna say much more here. I don't know all the facts."

Once more he admits the truth. If he wasn't there, then why does he talk so much about how things *might* have happened? It doesn't matter if he eventually admits his lack of knowledge, because he has already done the job of smearing Lucas's image and giving viewers the impression that he wanted.

The last couple of minutes is an irrelevant segment where Stoklasa, playing his psycho murderer character, pretends to lose his mind before getting into a confrontation with the police.

So ends a stupid review, that had all of a few decent general observations mixed into a vast sea of lies, distortions, and stupidity.

Conclusion

That was really something, wasn't it? And definitely not in a good way. I don't know how anyone can read this and still think that Stoklasa made good points in his review of TPM. Actually, I don't know how anyone thought he made good points in the first place. Throughout his review, Stoklasa relies on the same few tricks again and again. He asks stupid questions which the movie has already answered. He denies simple truths that were made clear to everyone. He repeatedly makes false or unsupported claims that increase the amount of negativity in his review, which will stick in people's minds even if he carefully retracts his statements later.

He also nitpicks the most insignificant details, while strangely not mentioning far more important things. Stoklasa doesn't seem to be aware of the basic themes of TPM. Yet he saw fit to criticize and suggest stunningly bad alternative stories for the movie that would've stripped it of much of its heart and meaning. This guy quite simply does not know what he is talking about.

Too many people have been swayed by his lousy arguments and deceptive tricks. I believe that the monstrous length of his review has protected it from criticism. At seventy minutes long, it at once appears daunting and authoritative. Any counterpoints to it appear selective and incomplete in comparison; RLM supporters can and have claimed that its detractors "haven't looked at the big picture" of what Stoklasa is saying. Well now, you have a rather complete "big picture" summary of the whole damn thing. Now, almost all of his points have been laid bare for everyone to see.

Writing this response took patience, as well as too much time. But it didn't take any special skills. Just a critical mindset that sought to verify any claims that were being made. If only more people took the time to check up on things that they read or hear.